

UNITED WE STAND: SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL  
A STUDY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POWER THROUGH A  
BONA FIDE GROUP PERSPECTIVE

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## DEDICATION

To my husband, Kevin E. Shaw, Sr.,  
my children, Kathrynne Elizabeth and Kevin E., Jr.,  
also to my father, Robert Champion,  
my mother, Kathrynne Sarti,  
and my sisters, Cassandra and Cammille,  
in recognition of their immeasurable value to my life and  
without whose constant love and encouragement  
I would have not continued to pursue this dream.  
An apology for all the times I could not be there and  
a promise to continue this work in the hopes of  
becoming a more effective communicator and working to enrich  
our already precious relationships and the world around us.

A sincere thank you to each of you for  
your patience in times of frustration,  
your comfort in times of despair,  
and your unwavering support.

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## ABSTRACT

Charmayne Champion-Shaw

### UNITED WE STAND: SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL, STUDYING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POWER THROUGH A BONA FIDE GROUP PERSPECTIVE

“In an increasingly abrasive and polarized American society, a greater commitment to social justice can play a constructive role in helping people develop a more sophisticated understanding of diversity and social group interaction, more critically evaluate oppressive social patterns and institutions, and work more democratically with diverse others to create just and inclusive practices and social structures.” The importance of social justice is to “help people identify and analyze dehumanizing sociopolitical processes, reflect on their own positions in relation to these processes so as to consider the consequences of oppressive socialization in their lives, and think proactively about alternative actions given this analysis. The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part” (Adams, Bell and Griffin, 1997) Utilizing a bona fide group perspective during an ethnographic study of a student group, this study examines how an individual’s perception of their self-constructed and group identity(ies) are manifested through social justice behavior – as members of a group whose purpose is to engage in social justice.

Kim White-Mills, PhD, Chair

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## INTRODUCTION

In his work on the field of social justice, Andrew Sturman (1997) asks the provocative question, “Is social justice important enough to warrant further interest?” We see questions such as these appearing throughout higher education in programs and policies and conferences, events, scholarly articles and books (Morris, 2009; North, 2006; Swartz, 2006). Although it is exciting to see so much interest in social justice and an expansion of awareness and knowledge about the field, critical and analytical perspective as well as personal engagement, are indispensable. Adams, Bell and Griffin (2007) posit that, “In an increasingly abrasive and polarized American society, social justice education can play a constructive role in helping people develop a more sophisticated understanding of diversity and social group interaction...” (p. xvii). If social justice education allows for critical evaluation of oppressive social patterns and institutions then social justice work is done more democratically with diverse others to create just and inclusive practices and social structures. As Adams, Bell and Griffin maintain

The importance of social justice is to help people identify and analyze dehumanizing sociopolitical processes, reflect on their own positions in relation to these processes so as to consider the consequences of oppressive socialization in their lives, and think proactively about alternative actions given this analysis (2007, p. 4).

In order to understand their own oppression and socialization within systemic and oppressive systems, social justice education allows one to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part. In a world steeped in oppression, developing a social justice process is no simple feat. The process for attaining the goal of social justice should be “democratic and

participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change” (Abrams, Bell and Griffin, 2007, p. xvii).

Gewirtz (1998) eloquently supports the idea that social justice remains an under-theorized concept that needs further investigation. One aspect of justice is fair or equal treatment of human beings. People who call for equal political treatment of human beings normally hold that all human beings, just because they are human beings have the right to equal treatment in certain areas like: the right to vote, equal treatment in court, but also equal opportunities, such as education and jobs, and equal distribution of necessary goods e.g. medical treatment. Many struggle in the face of financial difficulty, broken families, and violent neighborhoods. It is necessary to care for those in need - to serve the poor and to oppose injustice. But where do those efforts begin and how does one attempt to engage in social justice? Should we sign a petition? Campaign for certain laws? Stage a public march? Give money to charity? Call for a new government program? Start a church ministry? “Regrettably, ideas offered in the name of social justice have sometimes misdiagnosed the problem and had unintended consequences that hurt the very people they intended to help” (Messmore, 2007). That is because most issues are assessed from a very ethnocentric perspective and we are unable to see past our own identities or realities.

Messmore further argues that

Programs based on these assumptions have kept those willing to help at arm’s length from those in need, often looking first to government and substituting impersonal handouts for personal care and real transformation. Jumping into action without thoughtful consideration has led to damaging results. Somehow in the urgency to dedicate one’s life - or even a few hours or dollars - to a good cause, falls short of the intentions. Something is missing about who we are at our core as human beings; something is missing about the complex and relational nature of who we are and how we are socialized to see the world around us. Though motivated by good intentions, a better framework is required for

understanding and engaging the issues surrounding human need and social breakdown (2009, p. 1).

There is a basic need to understand the nature and context of translating good intentions into actions that really make a difference. The concept of the equality of human beings is perceived as the factual statement that human beings are equal as the basis of the request that human beings should be treated equal. There is a mythology created throughout American education that anyone can do what they want or be what they want if they only try hard enough. Americans have touted the idea of equality using the idiomatic expression “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps,” meaning that anyone is able to improve their situation through their own efforts. But as illustrated beautifully in a sermon given by the eloquent Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C. on March 31, 1968, four days before he was murdered, “It’s all right to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps.”

As Bernard Williams has pointed out in “The Idea of Equality,” in: *Problems of Self* (1973), the general consensus of the notion of equality is “wrong, because there are numerous counterexamples where human beings are clearly not equal, such as genetic differences, we differ in talents, upbringing, social circumstances, physical strength and health etc.” (p. 233). On the other hand if you interpret the statement alternatively, it is altogether too trivial to say that the only thing which is equal is the fact that we are all human beings. Williams (1973) suggests that between these two extremes the factual statement could be supported by the following consideration.

First and foremost, all human beings feel pain. In those societies where there have been gross inequalities using a criterion like color of the skin, those in the dominant society enable their actions as they disregard

the capacity of the individuals within these groups as human beings for feeling pain. (p.222)

In fact, according to Williams (1973, p. 237), this is demonstrated by the fact that people/societies who act like that, normally rationalize the discrimination. Those in power do not say that color of skin is sufficient for different treatment but they attribute some character deficiencies or lack of intelligence or other weakness to the group they are discriminating against. In his argument, Williams then claims that that all human beings are equal and have therefore a claim to equal treatment.

Secondly, all human beings have moral capacities. Kant (1785) argued that all men deserve equal respect as moral agents. Kant contended that there is a conflict between the vague notion of equal moral agents and the practice of holding men responsible for their actions according to their capacities, taking into account mental illness, moments of extreme anger, etc. Williams (1973) maintained that something is left of this notion in that we can request for every man that his point of view is considered, in what it means for him to live his life and to empathize with others. Another point Williams (1973) makes is that, “we should bear in mind that society can influence our consciousness. Therefore lack of suffering is, in itself, no guarantee that the system is fair” (p. 249).

There is also a problem in that the circumstances themselves may give certain groups an unfair advantage so that opportunities are equal only in theory. There are indeed cases where individuals have greater access to more and better resources. In those cases, should consideration be given to altering the underlying circumstances in order to provide truly equal opportunities? In his work on intergroup tensions Williams (1947) sees a problem regarding where to draw the line.

Should one, if it were possible, use brain surgery, genetic modification to erase differences that give advantage to more talented/intelligent children? Tried to the extreme, the notion of equal opportunity collides and threatens to obliterate the notion of personal identity and also the notion of equal respect deserved despite existing differences (p. 8).

The philosopher Robert Nozick criticized the idea of need giving a right to receive certain goods. He pointed out that in the case of medical treatment the doctor providing the treatment has a legitimate right to want to make a living out of his talent/skill and that this is the important consideration in the distribution of medical treatment. Nozick (2003) posits that “society should not interfere with unequal situations that have arisen as the result of legitimate actions” (p. 272). Take, for example, a situation where some people chose to save their money, and pay for a better education of their children, the children consequently get better jobs, they marry in the same social circle and due to good connections do even better, etc. The resulting inequality is the outcome of normal and legitimate actions. Nozick holds that people are entitled to have and keep property that they have legitimately earned, or the notion of entitlement. It is noteworthy that often people argue for certain rights without explaining where these rights come from.

Shared in a different sense: Is my desire to eat a piece of cake a sufficient reason for you to give me your cake or a piece of it? Or, is you merely having the cake legitimately a sufficient reason for me not to take it from you - if I want it? After all, is it not truly just a question of resources that one would have cake and also, of power, and whether to take or to keep the cake? It could be argued that society is a finely-balanced system of power structures where, for example, the need of the poor for medical treatment is met not just because of the need, but because all of us together have a mutual

agreement where we all pay taxes so that such expenses can be met should we ever need them, etc. Is there a difference then surrounding the need for cancer treatment rather than requests for luxury goods? If so, should society provide for basic needs for everyone? Who, then, decides the basic needs for all? Is it ultimately not a case of what a society can afford, and therefore a question of power and resources? (Dumitriu, 2009).

Consider “justice” in court - in a democratic society, people are said to be equal before the law, but the rich and famous can afford better counsel while the indigent utilize public counsel which are overworked and underpaid. In education we have public policy that mandates “no child left behind,” giving a sense that every single American child has the right to go to school. However, those children with wealthy parents who typically have attended college themselves, gain not only monetary benefits but also from legacies and from access to the processes and protocols of their parents succeeding in college. How does this compare to a child who has to work several times as hard with minimal limit to resources and who must fight for a scholarship between thousands of similarly income-challenged students without any parental prior knowledge as to how to navigate through the process? Again - existing circumstances can give the advantage to certain groups as opposed to others. Social justice is an undertaking that requires the action of more than one person or even one large organization. It takes individuals, families, churches, non-profit groups, universities, businesses, and government - all playing their distinct roles - to make progress on complex problems. The communication within these groups then must be considered in the work of approaching and working towards social justice.

## **Social Justice in Groups**

Change cannot happen without examination and exploration. The communication processes of groups and organizations allow for incredible research opportunities which highlight how communication, education and diversity as agencies of social change are made through groups and organizations. As Craig (2007) and others have noted, the communication studies field is nothing, if not practical. As Wood (2010) has pointed out, social justice has long been studied and promoted throughout communication scholarship (p. 111). According to structuration theory in communication studies, members of groups bring their perceptions, expectations and experiences that they have had with other people to the group (Giddens, 1994). Structuration theory explains the communication patterns and rules that groups create and re-create in their decision making (Poole, Seibold, and McPhee, 1996). The self-expectations of members of a group provide a foundation for the roles they will assume in the group. Each role is worked out between each of the group members and as they interact with others; they form impressions which support each member's responsibilities to the group. In turn, these help to form each individual's self-concept. People assume roles because of their interests and abilities and because of the needs and expectations of the rest of the group. As Frey (2009) cites in his pivotal work on group communication in context,

Each member of a group, in one way or another potentially influences others in many different ways. That influence may come in the form of very personal feelings such as belongingness or self-esteem and self-worth to more organizational influence such as the power that the group has to inform or affect societal changes (p. 13).

Group membership and social justice function in similar ways in that it is integral that each member feels a positive sense of reciprocity that they are both giving and

receiving in productive ways. For example, several organizational communication scholars and proponents of social justice suggest that to engender a sense of shared ownership, participants need to be consulted in developing the agenda. To demonstrate respect for the participants, their knowledge and experience should be the starting point for all activities. Ideally, in order to sustain a learning community, participants should collaborate on every project, not just focus on their own individual projects. But even at best, collaboration should be the goal most of the time! All this should be done to ensure balanced participation among group members.

When people join groups, the assumption is that the other group members share their commitment to the group's task. If a problem is to be solved, they take for granted that others view the problem in much the same way they do. However, each person brings a different perspective to the group. In a very real sense, it is impossible to separate our individual identities from our socialization within various social groups and communities. Social justice cannot be understood in individual terms alone, for societies are developed along social group status. People may affirm their group identity(ies) as a source of sustenance, pride, and personal meaning. For example, a member of the Sioux Nation may be proud of the heritage and contributions of their ancestors. Simultaneously, people may also feel victimized by the advantaged group's characterization of their group in ways they experience as oppressive and reject as invalid, so that the same Sioux may be denied a job or access to education due to his/her American Indian identity (Sherif, 1935). This does not mean that all members of a particular group will necessarily define themselves in exactly the same way. Put another way, Young (1990) shares

A person's self-defined group identity may be central, as religious identity is to a traditionally observant Jew. Or it may be mainly

background, only becoming salient in certain interactional contexts, as Jewish identity may become for someone assimilating to the Jewish faith when confronted with anti-Semitism. Either way, both must struggle for self-definition within their shared burden as targets of anti-Semitism (p. 29).

Young (1990) also ascertains

The tension between individual and group identity(ies) is complicated further by the fact that group identity is also, for many people, self-consciously chosen and affirmed as a fundamental aspect of self-definition. Self-ascription, belonging to a group with others who similarly identify themselves, who affirm or are committed together to a set of values, practices, and meaning is an important concept to many in American society (p. 34).

Finally, neither individual identities nor social groups are homogeneous or stable, Individuals are formed partly through group relations and affinities that are “multiple, cross-cutting, fluid and shifting” (Young, 1990, p. 48). Postmodern writers have argued persuasively against the notion of a unitary subject and essentializing notions of group identity that ignore the fluid and changing ways that people experience themselves both as individuals and as members of different social groups over the course of a lifetime (Anzaldua, 1987; Mohanty et al., 1991; Putnam and Stohl, 1990).

The dynamics between members of the group dictate the development, the growth and movement of the group, and its action and advocacy through social justice. Initial questions posed by B. Aubrey Fisher (1993) regarding small group communication have provided some of the basis for this project and will help to inform the discussion of the dynamics of those in the group and hopefully lead to a more thorough understanding as a result of the experience. The main focus of the project then is to ask how one’s perception of their self-constructed individual and group identity(ies) affect their social justice work.

## **Social Justice in Bona Fide Groups**

While groups often play a major role in the changes that move us to social justice, how they do so is not always well understood. A bona fide group perspective offers a frame for understanding groups and allows us to consider how individuals operate in naturally occurring groups, which can tell us something about the process by which social justice is both learned about and served in group dynamics. The particular stimulus for the project here is this idea of social justice and the perception or awareness and inequality of knowledge, status and access, and how this perception affects the group members both realized and unconsidered. The interactions have their own interesting dynamic, of course, and a great deal of insight is gained by the coming together of unequal members of the dominant and subordinated groups (i.e. White and non-White, male and female, etc.) Linda Putnam and Cynthia Stohl first conceptualized the bona fide group perspective in 1990. Putnam and Stohl (1996) emphasized that bona fide groups cannot be considered containers with unambiguous boundaries, and focused on how group identity is formed. Group identity is influenced by the degree of belongingness to the target group and the loyalty and commitment to other groups. In an extension of the bona fide group perspective, there are two aspects greatly considered. The first is the idea of interdependence, or that group members are also the members of multiple groups which is directly linked then to the group's identity with implications for the person within the group. John Lammers and Dean Krikorian (1997) elaborated on aspects of context including the fact that bona fide groups operate at multiple levels, are simultaneously tightly coupled (interdependent) in some areas and loosely coupled (independent) in other areas, are resource-dependent, and have competing internal and

external authority or power systems. Second is the aspect of the fluidity of the boundaries and the idea that groups are constantly changing which affects the resources that the person gains and losses from group membership, in either absolute terms or relative to what is available in other groups. A bona fide group should be considered in terms of its age, its task duration, the characteristics of its members, and its institutional history, highlights two important aspects of groups, either or both of which might shape group member's cooperation and engagement. In reflecting on how social justice is learned and coordinated within a group, the bona fide perspective provides insight as it holds that the central reason that people engage themselves in groups is because they use the feedback they receive from those groups to create and maintain their identities. People want to feel good about the work that the group is doing. The model hypothesizes that, of the two aspects of group functioning, it is the development and maintenance of a favorable identity that most strongly influences the group's motivation to action. The bona fide construct predicts that people's willingness to cooperate with their group - especially cooperation that is discretionary in nature - flows from the identity information they receive from the group. That identity information, in turn, is hypothesized to emanate from evaluations of the procedural fairness experienced in the group. This suggests that identity evaluations and concerns mediate the relationship between social justice judgments and group engagement. Why might this be so? It is widely recognized that groups shape individuals' definitions of themselves and their feelings of well-being and self-worth (Hogg and Abrams, 1990; Sedikides and Brewer, 2001). In particular, group memberships shape people's conceptions of their social selves - the aspect of the self that is formed through identification with groups. Groups help to define who people are and

help them to evaluate their status. The first part of this process involves social categorization of individuals, the taking on of the categories that define one's group and using them to construct one's self-image. Thus, to some degree, people's sense of their own worth is linked to the groups to which they belong. The second part of the process involves linking this self-constructed identity with social justice work done as part or on behalf of the group. This aspect of what is learned within the group and how the dynamics affect the individuals and the outcomes of the group within those contexts will be the focus of this discussion.

The bona fide group perspective (Putnam and Stohl, 1990) is one of several developed in the 1990s in contrast to studies that observed groups created in a sterile environment. One major component is that it recognizes groups "exists within a larger context and is defined, in part, by this context" (Hirokawa, Cathcart, Samovar, and Henman, 2003). Since its initial publication it has been widely used in a variety of group settings. Bona fide group perspective provides a description of the functions of a group rather than predict their actions. In one of the defining works on small group communication, Putnam and Stohl (1996) theorize that

A bona fide group perspective advocates a more fundamental break with past literature, one that extends beyond simply focusing on groups in natural settings. It is not an effort to privilege the external environment over the internal dynamics of group communication, nor is it focused primarily on networks, linkages, and group interfaces. It lays out an alternative perspective, one that challenges the traditional notions of what constitutes a group (p. 248).

This idea that a bona fide group perspective posits that the boundary of a group is not specific or particular is unique in how each group socially constructs or negotiates the fluidity of its borders in developing its own identity. Fluidity and interdependence then

are the key constructs in which other internal and external processes evolve; thus they serve as an excellent access for understanding small group interaction. The focus here is on social justice and how individual identity and group identity(ies) directly relates and affects the social justice work in which we engage. The very nature of this project's exploration of fluidity of these identities and how they interrelate with social justice embodies these two most important aspects of the bona fide group perspective, as defined by Putnam and Stohl (1990)

Context is nested in group interaction as individual members reference, negotiate, and develop their social system. A group, then, is not a container, nor does it have a fixed location in relation to its social context. By examining fluidity and interdependence, scholars can explore how group members conceive of themselves as a group (p. 290).

A great deal of group communication “fieldwork” involves interactions likely to give rise to a variety of issues: who gains by it, underlying significance, how it is to be justified and how is it perceived by the various participants. students knew they wanted to contribute and be active participants in creating a sense of “equality” for fellow human beings, but had to work together as a group to define what and how that “equality” is constructed and what they could do, as a group, towards that end. The bona fide perspective, specifically because of its view on the fluidity of membership boundaries and the interdependence of how groups work both intrinsically and outwardly, proved to be an excellent means to study students whose purpose is to work to resolve social justice issues and inherent unique challenges. This was an incredibly unique opportunity to utilize bona fide group perspective in examining a group of undergraduate students. The students were engaged in advocacy as social justice agents and were able to reflect on how individual and group identities shape how social justice is viewed. This, in turn,

directed and guided the group's objectives. Each individual comes together to act as a catalyst or energetic force that will push each out of their own areas of comfort and knowledge and hopefully bring others together in order to learn from each other about personal and global issues. In this way, each member of the group actually serves as transformative for the other individuals and hopefully plays a part in shifting the collective consciousness.

Prior to the work of L.L. Putnam and C. Stohl in 1990, most scholars identified very fundamental features to characterize a group - common goals among members, interdependence in working together, perceived boundaries, etc. Putnam and Stohl (1990) redefined how we characterize groups with their concept of bona fide group perspective. They argued that, "groups are socially constituted rather than objectively recognized. Groups are fluid in form and degree, and interdependent with their social context. The bona fide perspective treats groups as socially constructed rather than objectively defined by a set of criteria, e.g., goals, boundaries, membership, etc. Thus, particular dimensions or characteristics of groupness, such as cohesiveness and effectiveness, are created by the group itself rather than presumed to have been there all the time."

The bona fide group perspective offers us an exciting lens in which to explore group communication and in this instance, how social justice is manifested through individual and group identity and how those behaviors are exemplified in the name of social justice. From this bona fide perspective, we take into consideration the complexity and multiplicity of identities. Organizations are made up of individuals with a broad spectrum of involvement in other groups which contributes significantly to a group's particular identity. It is important then to recognize the difference in backgrounds and complexity

of each of the members' individual identity as it relates to the group as a whole. Religious doctrine or family traditions and the depth to which those traditions are held as well as school and neighborhood demographics and the similarity or difference to and between those demographics all create personal frameworks which are used - both consciously and unconsciously to determine our belief system and how therefore to communicate and operate within each group that is encountered.

Working with individuals highlights the perspectives of the dynamics involved in groups that work and groups that do not work. When individuals come together, there are always many issues and factors involved. The first is the reason why each individual becomes a participant. Every person comes with ideas and some bring their own agenda or expectations. Everyone in the group attends with similar concerns and questions about acceptance or rejection, being different, the risks involved in opening up their feelings, and most importantly, the possibility of finding out something about themselves that they might not be able to handle. The second major factor is the process that the group itself begins for each individual and the process or experience that the group has come together to accomplish. These processes are the sub-conscious needs or urges of every individual to come together in groups for particular experiences.

During the initial few stages of a group's organization, there is typically silence, awkwardness, impatience, confusion, storytelling, anxiety, issues surrounding trust and mistrust, cautious and safe conversations, testing of each other and the need to feel important. These dynamics come not only from the individuals themselves but also inform how the power dynamics begin to form based upon the roles assumed by the individuals within the group. This work has allowed a unique opportunity of observing

individuals within a group, the energy surrounding them and the group, and the issues of each individual that must play out during the group gathering. The energy of the group has an effect on each member. When the group concludes, members note a sense of finality; often questioning their own role, the responsibilities and outcome of their objectives and gauge their success or failure based on their own individual preconceptions of success. Time is another aspect considered and sometimes seemed to be lost and unrecoverable. These moments of self-discovery are critical moments as the group defines itself through its members and those individuals who emerge as leaders most especially when the focus of the group is social justice. Though each individual brings their own uniqueness, there must be certain goals on which the group agrees, and these formative steps will dictate what specific social justice action will be taken.

Previous research on small group communication from B. Aubrey Fisher provided initial answers to questions like: Do the individuals of the group come together for certain specific experiences, regardless of the purpose of the organization? Does the group have a particular purpose in forming? Does the group actually form a consciousness that affects the collective? Each person who has ever participated in a group purpose will have a different perception and thus, a different answer to these questions. Fisher (1993) showed groups going sequentially through an orientation stage, a conflict stage, a stage in which a decision emerges and a stage in which that decision is reinforced (p. 86). However, this research had several fundamental flaws. All group data was combined before analysis, making it impossible to determine whether there were differences among groups in their sequence of discussion and group discussion content was compared across the same number of stages as the researcher hypothesized, such that if the researcher

believed there were four stages to discussion, there was no way to find out if there actually were five or more. More recent work has shown that groups differ substantially in the extent to which they spiral. In reviewing this literature there is a fundamental aspect that is neglected which is that consideration was given only to outcome or content and not to the individual and personal motivation of each of the group's members. In considering the decision that each individual makes, it is imperative to determine how they arrived at their personal conclusion as part of the overarching group decision. For example, consider a social justice group which decides to hold a rally in support of religious freedom. Imagine that there are two members who both support the initiative fully and have decided to devote themselves to the planning of the event. How does this play out if one individual within the group is a devote Christian whose concept of religious freedom is the importance of prayer in school and another member of the group believes that religious freedom is the right to exclude prayer from all schools? None of this earlier work reflects the distinct differences between an individual's personal identity conflicting with what the group decides and does not attempt to link discussion content with task output. The most successful attempt at that can be found in a 1980's research program of communication researcher Randy Y. Hirokawa (1985). The implication of this program is that to an extent, depending upon task, the quality of a group's decision appears to be associated with the extent to which the group examines the problem it faces, identifies the requirements of an ideal solution and evaluates the positive and negative features of proposed solutions. Work relevant to social influence in groups has a long history. Two early examples of social psychological research have been particularly influential. The first of these was by Muzafer Sherif (1935) using the auto kinetic effect.

Sherif asked participants to voice their judgments of light movement in the presence of others and noted that these judgments tended to converge. The second of these was a series of studies by Solomon Asch (1951), in which naive participants were asked to voice their judgments of the similarity of the length of lines after hearing the “judgments” of several confederates (research assistants posing as participants) who purposely voiced the same obviously wrong judgment. In about 35% of the cases, participants voiced the obviously wrong judgment. When asked why, many of these participants reported that they had originally made the correct judgment but after hearing the confederates, decided the judgments of several others (the confederates) should be trusted over theirs (Sherif, 1935). As a consequence of these and other studies, social psychologists have come to distinguish between two types of social influence and the importance of establishing a structure of the conceptions of power.

## **Power and the Bona Fide Perspective**

We know that power plays a part among the individuals of every group. Individuals within a group who attempt to manipulate or control the energy within a group can be disruptive to the point that other participants feel their ability to learn, grow or participate is compromised. It may be that the group members decide that disruptive individuals should be asked to leave the group. The benefit of being witness to group interaction “up close and personal” is to observe the energy of each individual within each group and the forces that change the direction of the group’s focus. Had any one individual not been present during any of the various group processes, the entire set of power dynamics could have possibly played out in another direction. There is an awareness that group process can lead to an individual sense of cooperation and coordination. When two or more people gather together for a common cause, participants often combine their talents so their individual creative abilities are increased and their awareness enhanced. The fundamental facet of the group interaction here is in determining how the social justice work will be directed.

In looking at how social justice functions within a group, power plays a large role in the communication processes that allow the group to function. One of the ways that power influences the group is through the roles that each different group member takes on and the effect that has on the relationships within the group. Individuals who come together as a group bring their individual heritage, experiences, knowledge and awareness as well as fears and insecurities to the group. Each individual helps to hone or shape the group as a whole. The issues may be felt and experienced differently by each participant of the group, but the group must still act collectively. These issues for the

individuals are reflected in their daily lives: issues of power and control, etc. Members of the group must relate to each other, but this can be challenging as one member attempts to relate to another with different background, traditions and upbringing? In their initial research French and Raven (1959) had not included knowledge regarding the fluidity of the group nor the interdependence of a group with its relevant contexts, but as we know, this is imperative in looking at groups through the bona fide perspective as we explore social justice. Cervero and Wilson (1994) ask us to consider power as the capacity to act, and that power is distributed unequally among us. They explain that we are always exercising power in the direction of our interests. In other words, we exercise power to get what we want. Unequal power relationships, by their very nature, can threaten participatory, democratic communication. Oetzel and Robbins (2003) state that the identity of a group is who we are and what we do. The identity of the group is the lens shaped by the group members of how they view the world. Elements studied within the discipline of a group includes the relationships between individuals and teams, the distribution of roles and responsibilities among team members, team performance, influence and power, and inter-group relationships. Individuals that have different cultural backgrounds bring unique perspectives to a team. Cultural differences are one factor that can contribute to the miscommunication and conflict that can derail team process. In designing this project power was integral to the dialogue as well as the challenges faced by a student organization comprised of students who were ready, willing and able to commit to conducting research and moving to action in the name of social justice.

It became critical to determine whether and how one component of culture, power distance, could provide insight into group dynamics. The term “culture” is used to describe those habits, actions, and assumptions that members of a group or society have learned in common and have set as values (Rosman and Rubel, 1995, p. 25). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) as well as Schein (1992) consider culture to be that aspect of a society that provides implicit structures and rules about the way people get along, work together, and solve problems as they deal with issues of change, either through the integration of new elements into existing social structures or by adapting social structures to fit with new elements in the environment. Arguably, however, most pertinent to this work is how power will be defined. Hofstede (1991) used the term “cultural dimensions” to refer to the common elements of a culture or the key issues of a culture that can be studied and analyzed in meaningful ways. He outlined five cultural dimensions as: power distance, or the extent to which individuals at lower levels of a cultural hierarchy accept their lack of autonomy and authority versus power shared throughout a hierarchy; individualism, an emphasis on self and immediate family versus an emphasis on the greater collective; masculinity as the extent to which traditionally male goals of wealth and recognition are valued; uncertainty avoidance, or the extent to which risk and ambiguity are acceptable conditions; and long-term orientation which is an emphasis on fostering virtues that is oriented toward future rewards versus emphasis on immediate gratification.

Hofstede (1991) cited power distance as one of most problematic cultural dimensions for effective group performance. Power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country

expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 98). In low power distance groups, individuals generally believe that inequalities between levels of the hierarchy should be minimized, that subordinates in the hierarchy should be consulted by those at higher levels, and that the ideal leader believes power resides in the people. In contrast, in high power distance groups, inequalities between hierarchy levels are expected and even desired, subordinates expect to be told what to do, and the ideal leader has absolute undisputed authority yet uses it for the good of the people.

Hofstede (1991, 2001) emphasized power distance as an important factor that impacts team relationships. Participating effectively in autonomous project-based teams may be more challenging for students with high power distance orientations. Decision-making processes and approaches to conflict resolution are likely to be influenced by the group’s power distance level. Conflict management in teams with a low power distance factor is based on principles of negotiation and cooperation, while in high power distance teams; conflict is resolved primarily by the power holder (Deutsch, 1973). Milgram’s (1973) classic research on power and authority illustrated that when individuals perceive they are agents of a remote higher authority (i.e., when an individual becomes part of a group that has high power distance), the individual may well come to believe that he or she no longer has control of his or her own actions. This state of affairs would not be conducive to productive teamwork. Hofstede’s (1991) power distance indicators can be used very effectively to analyze power distance in the context of educational teams or organizations. These indicators include high/low dependence needs, the acceptance or minimization of inequality, the need for hierarchy, accessibility of superiors, equal rights vs. privileged power holders, and change processes (see Table 1).

There are a vast number of questions which remained unanswered as it relates to the consideration of each group member's identity and how those identities play a role in their identity as a group member. Questions also remain about the construction of power dynamics within the group and in the case of a group dedicated to making effective social change, how those dynamics affect both the inner workings of the group and the any actual advocacy work done as a result of their group. But, utilizing the bona fide perspective and two particular elements, the fluidity of membership boundaries and interdependence of members help in this research to begin to explore how students from different membership groups may face unique challenges in working together, united in their activism.

Table 1. Indicators of power distance for educational groups (Hofstede, 1991)

High power distance indicators	Low power distance indicators
<p>High dependence needs:            Teacher-centered education. The guru who transfers a personal wisdom.            Teacher is expected to initiate communication. Less powerful people should be dependent on the more powerful</p>	<p>Low dependence need:            Educational process is student-centered. Students take initiative. Teachers are experts that stress impersonal truth, which can in principle be obtained from any competent person, Interdependence between less and more powerful people.</p>
<p>Inequality accepted:            Whomever holds power is right and good. One is never publicly criticized. Latent conflict between powerful-powerless. No criticism made or expressed of disagreement. Teachers are treated with respect and have authority both inside and outside the class.</p>	<p>Inequality minimized:            Use of power should be legitimate and is subject to criteria of good and evil. Latent harmony in a group. Learning is related to sharing disagreement and using two-way communication. Teachers are treated as equals both inside and outside the class.</p>
<p>Hierarchy needed:            Inequality between those in power and subordinates. Centralization of decision-making is an accepted norm.</p>	<p>Hierarchy for convenience:            Based on formal position, expertise, reward and ability to give rewards. Decentralization of decision making is an accepted norm.</p>
<p>Superiors often inaccessible:            Like a benevolent autocrat. Inaccessible to their subordinates. Subordinates are told what to do.</p>	<p>Superiors accessible:            Like a resourceful democrat. A person that is resourceful and accessible to their subordinates. Subordinates are consulted in the decision making process.</p>
<p>Power holders have privileges:            Skills, wealth of knowledge, and power determine status. Status symbols are expected.</p>	<p>All have equal rights:            Skills, wealth of knowledge, and power are not necessarily indicators of status. Powerful person tries to look less powerful than they are.</p>
<p>Change by revolution:            Change occurs through power struggle.</p>	<p>Change by evolution:            Change occurs through voting and power sharing.</p>

## **Members of the Group Examined**

Research usually starts with a question where a researcher is intrigued or passionate about a subject or topic and is looking at that problem or question in search of an answer. There is a Cheyenne proverb that states that our first teacher is our heart, and this research was certainly driven by passion. Social justice, or the idea that all groups fully and equally participate in a society that is mutually agreed to and shaped to meet everyone's needs and is equitable where all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, is what has driven the preparation, consideration and completion of this project. With that in mind, what an incredible opportunity to be able to study and observe a small group dedicated to the research and commission of social justice work. It was incredibly interesting to investigate the complex characteristics of the personal influence and interaction of the group members and how they worked together towards solving personal problems and challenges within the group as they examined social justice issues at a global level within the Model United Nations conference. This allowed for a truly exceptional research opportunity.

The traditional Model United Nations (MUN) format is one of the most popular and effective active learning techniques to engage students about the complexities of cultural differences, most specifically - the international system, the evolving system of global governance, the effects of globalization, and the limits of international organizations. Typically, the format necessitates a large number of participants who debate a broad range of political, social, economic, and environmental issues from the perspective of the state level. In a world where UN diplomacy is multifaceted and multilevel, students can benefit from alternative UN based simulations that draw on the

Model United Nations format, but move beyond it as well. Model UN ambassadors experience firsthand the benefits of cooperative learning and the best outcomes of multicultural education. The Model UN is a popular experiential learning program that engages students through cooperative learning techniques and multicultural education. Whether they participate in classroom simulations or attend any of the 150 conferences held across the United States and the world, students get caught up in the experience.

While the United Nations turn recently turned 50 years, the even older Model UN is going strong (Muldoon, 1995). Begun in 1926 as the Model League of Nations, the program was initially an activity for university-level students. In the 1950s, the approach was recognized as an effective tool for younger students as well. More recently, the program has become increasingly popular in middle schools. Except for a year's hiatus during World War II, the program has been in continuous operation since the 1920s. Every year more than 60,000 students from 2,000 colleges throughout the United States participate in role-play simulations of UN meetings. Students enjoy the experience because it challenges them intellectually, involves them in stimulating group activities, exposes them to other ways of thinking, and prepares them for careers in international politics.

Students are assigned the roles of ambassadors of UN member states and, through negotiation and debate, seek resolutions to global problems on the UN's. Students explore such contemporary issues in the context of other countries' governmental policies. They are challenged to go beyond their personal views and to grasp and communicate the interests of the government they are representing. To do this, they must learn the customs, history, and political nature of the countries they are assigned to

represent, as well as the rules and procedures of the UN committee or body to which they will be ambassadors. Model United Nations can be conducted in class or as an off-campus event. Some schools incorporate the program into the curriculum as a class for credit (Johnson 1988), but in most schools it is a co-curricular or extracurricular club. Collaborating with other students to tackle relevant issues is a strong appeal of the program. The Model UN fits an essential feature of cooperative learning, students working together to accomplish shared goals where students are given two responsibilities: to learn the assigned materials and make sure that all other members of their group do likewise (Johnson and Johnson, 1988). Research demonstrates that for high-level cognitive learning outcomes, such as identifying concepts, analysis of problems, judgment, and evaluation, less-structured cooperative techniques may be more effective than traditional individualistic techniques (Slavin, 1989). In addition, cooperative learning promotes higher achievement, greater motivation, more positive interpersonal relations among students, more positive attitudes toward the subject area and teacher, greater self-esteem and psychological health, more accurate perspectives, and greater social skills (Johnson and Johnson, 1988). On a more complex level, each student becomes well-versed on one aspect of the unit. During the conference, students are arranged into master groups where the same subject is discussed. The students meet with these groups and then return to their main group and teach their team members what they learned. Participation in the Model U N also teaches students that they are members of a global community. Through engaging activities that unite students around a common cause, the program is an excellent tool for meeting the objectives of social justice education and explicitly for studying group communication and power through a bona

fide perspective. According to James Banks (1993), most noted theorists and researchers in social justice education agree that the movement is designed to restructure educational institutions so that all students, including middle-class White males, will acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively in a culturally and ethnically diverse nation and world. Banks adds that social justice education helps all students, regardless of sex or race, “to become more knowledgeable, caring, and active citizens in a deeply troubled and ethnically polarized nation and world.” Success at a Model UN conference depends on the ability of the organization to act as a unified delegation where consensus and cooperate is built within the group and also with other delegates. It is for this reason that the delegation to a Model UN conference was chosen to explore group communication in context.

This study considers a student organization called the World Relations Group (WRG). The group consists of undergraduate students all of whom were afforded the opportunity to attend the annual National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference held in New York City. The WRG was created as a student in August 2008. The idea for the formation of the group had arisen from the class mentioned earlier that was offered on the campus in spring 2007. As a class, the students that participated had absolutely no financial support from the university and any that attended the NMUN had to pay out of their own pockets for the registration fee, transportation to the conference, accommodations and any personal expenses such as food and local transportation, etc. This proved to be a hardship on most of the students, though the majority felt the experience of participating in the NMUN was superlative and worthy of working to create a more plausible solution to be able to return. Over the summer, three participants

who returned to campus as students began a discussion of creating a formal organization that would allow students to attend the NMUN not as a class, but as a student organization. It was decided that the organization would be called the World Relations Group (WRG) with a focus on creating awareness on global issues. The only requirement for participating was current enrollment at the university. Anyone would be able to join the WRG, but select members would be chosen to attend the NMUN. The group would also work on increasing membership and with more interested students participating, would aspire to attend the NMUN in Washington, D.C. and perhaps even the American Model United Nations (AMUN) in Chicago. The WRG began circulating membership flyers out around campus and spoke with several professors in the Communication Studies, Political Science and International Studies departments in order to arouse interest and secure willing students who would want to participate in the program. Before August there were fourteen interested students, but motivation was driven by whether or not funding would be secured and their trip would be paid. In the end, with the additional students who had committed going to the UN whether funding was available or not, there was a total of twelve undergraduate students. With the common goal of securing funding, preparing to participate as a delegation, and attending the conference, the group was formed. The group included consisted of six females and six males. Though the names of all have been changed to protect their identities, we will call the six females: Faith, Teri, Tara, Amber, Clarisse and Avery; the males we will call: Pete, Todd, Cliff, Omar, Richard and Ian.

In preparation for the NMUN Conference, the group met twice a month. Upon registration to the conference, the group was assigned the country of Jamaica. Conference

organizers chose several pertinent global topics and it was the responsibility of each of the members of the group to learn how Jamaica and its government would respond to those topics. Each member was assigned to a specific committee (which at the NMUN reflect the actual UN committees) and would have to write a well-written, well-thought out position paper as well as represent Jamaica as a delegate in the particular meetings for that committee. Delegates would need to learn about the island country of Jamaica, its history and current political opinions and prepare to answer questions and work toward creating partnerships within the committees as representatives of Jamaica. The meetings were held in a closed meeting room in the university's library and lasted for two hours, every other Friday. With the origination of these meetings in August and the conference being held in March this afforded several months to conduct observations and in-depth interviews.

### **Participant - Observer Role or Researcher**

Because of my employment with the university, my deep interest and my previous experience, I was asked to take the position as advisor of the WRG. This allowed me access to the meetings and gave me the opportunity to be a part of the meetings and conversations but to sit back quietly and watch how the group dynamics unfolded. I was a part of the team but not vocal or visibly engaged in group decision making, deliberation and/or development. This enabled me to focus on each team member and their individual perceptions of their identity and in turn, how those individual identities lent themselves to how they exerted their power within the group through their interaction with each other as well as defining the social justice work that they would do as part of the WRG at the NMUN. Using the bona fide perspective to look at power, utilizing specifically the two aspects of the fluidity of boundaries and interdependence, I was able to focus on how each member's perception of their individual self-constructed and group identity(ies) manifest itself in the work of social justice behavior.

Members of the group included both full-time and part-time students, with ages ranging from eighteen (18) to twenty-six (26) years old. In total, there were twenty-two WRG group participants and 12 individuals who attended the NMUN in New York. Participants were solicited through a variety of methods including the campus newspaper and media source. Leaders of the student affinity groups on campus were asked to inform their membership, flyers were distributed through the campus's student - community involvement division and various resources were utilized including a student organization networking site. Deans and professors in various departments were contacted in order to both to inform the students in their programs and even specific classes within the

communication Studies, political science, international studies, women's studies departments and liberal arts programs and offices.

All 22 students engaged in the WRG were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (See Appendix D). The questions focused on demographics such as race, ethnicity, age, etc. and campus information, student status, residency, amount of time spent on campus and student engagement both generally in student organizations as well as leadership positions. Because this study focuses on how identity impacts the social work being done by the group members, it is important to reflect on these demographics as part of the structure of the study and how identity was measured. Non-participant observations were conducted at each of the organization meetings over the course of the year. All attending members sat in a circle at the stationary table while the observer sat off to the side seemingly attending to other matters while taking notes throughout. Observations described the contributions of students in the meetings and the general processes for their interactions with one another. In general, the observations lasted between 45 and 60 minutes depending on the meeting time and content. The students were also observed as a group in attendance at the NMUN conference. The students participated in meetings with other students from around the world in various settings. There were small meetings held with 4-6 people and also large plenary sessions with as many as 5,000 students. Individual interviews were conducted with five of the twelve students who are known as campus leaders. Many of the students hold positions of leadership in organizations on campus. All of these students were interviewed using the individual interview protocol (See Appendix C). Individuals were asked questions surrounding their introduction to the group, group dynamics and group leadership in

order to ascertain their personal perspective on group communication and power. The interviews each lasted from 30 - 60 minutes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded by multiple researchers. The themes generated were considered in relation to the overarching research question which was how one's perception of their self-constructed individual and group identity(ies) affect their social justice work. This resulted in a striking outcome in that these students, who were genuinely and profoundly engaged in social justice work were unable to see how their own identity and that of the group affected the decisions within the group and also had great difficulty recognizing how those identities influenced their social justice efforts. The nature of social justice and its themes asserts a power differential in overarching ideas of racism, White privilege and immigrant status; sexism, heterosexism and transgender experiences; religious oppression and anti-Semitism; and classism, ableism and ageism/adultism. In order to identify the frame of references for the individuals, I assert it was critical to ascertain, as best as possible, the demographics of the group. I would contend that in order to entertain a discussion on social justice, personal perspective is integral to the dialogue. If I highlight a position that the group takes on a particular cultural issue, for example, it is important to determine if the individuals making a group decision are diverse within their belief systems, or are predominantly from one cultural group. The perspective of each person in the group directs the decisions that are made by the group. The group was predominantly White, middle-class Americans with strong Christian beliefs.

## **Ethnography and the Bona Fide Group Perspective**

There are almost no limits to what humans can do when they meet. However, most cultures have set certain codes as to how to react when meeting others. Identifying these boundaries or restrictions illuminates the behaviors and values within the boundaries. Ethnography is an inward looking process, seeking to uncover tacit knowledge of participants in the specific culture under study and it is most likely to deal with interpersonal interaction. The ultimate goal of an ethnography is to create the an unobtrusive agent, namely to obtain all the knowledge necessary for a researcher to gather to become knowledgeable with as little effect as possible on the affect and be able to make analysis on the situation on the basis of the information obtained from the ethnographer.

Ethnography describes the behaviors, values, beliefs and practices of the participants in a given cultural setting. However, as Wolcott (1985) writes in his classic article on ethnographic intent, description is not enough to constitute ethnography because “Culture is not lying about, waiting patiently to be discovered; rather, it must be inferred from the words and actions of members of the group under study. (p. 192).” Ethnography involves cultural analysis. Analyzing a culture means not simply recounting behaviors and events, but inferring the cultural roles that guide behaviors and events. The intention of ethnography is to capture the everyday, the unwritten laws, conventions and customs that govern the behavior of persons and sub-groups within a culture. Although this approach is commonly used by anthropologists to study exotic cultures and primitive societies, Spradley (1979) suggests that it is a useful tool for “understanding how other

people see their experience” (p. iv). He emphasizes, however, that “rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people” (p. 3).

This ethnographic study of social justice and the impact of identity examines the experiences of how power was evaluated from within an organization. This “insider knowledge” provides an overview of the organization and how power dynamics played a part of the individuals within the group. With this exclusive viewpoint, the faculty advisor was able to help the students pursue their goal of attending the NMUN conference. A thorough understanding of the membership and how that relates to power dynamics, as part of the fluidity of each individual’s group memberships, could arguably only be achieved through an ethnographic endeavor such as this. Observation, interview and questionnaire data were collected and analyzed to explore emergent themes related to the research question.

Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the analysis of interviews generated themes that gave insight into the outcomes. These commonalities might highlight how group member’s perceptions could affect the group processes as they work to achieve social justice. Overall, the analysis for this project followed the conventions of the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Specifically, individual researchers defined and applied data component codes and categories to each interview and the field note transcripts. Each text was read first individual and then re-read as a group and discussions about coding decisions were shared with the primary investigator (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Once the preliminary read of the data was accomplished, the team met to discuss the interview and field note transcripts using a consensual qualitative research (CQR) method (Hill, Thompson, and

Williams, 1997). Each member of the research team independently reviewed the transcripts to generate the codes and came together to discuss their respective codes. They arrived at consensus on each code before proceeding to the next step in analysis. The same procedure was used for theme identification within cases and for the cross-case analysis, constantly comparing perceptions of students.

A primary threat to the validity of a qualitative research study is inaccuracy or incompleteness of the data (Maxwell, 1996). A second threat to the validity of any study is a problem of interpretation. In order to reduce the bias and achieve reliability, a coding scheme was created for this project. Qualitative analysis transforms data into theory. No formula exists for that transformation- guidance yes, but no recipe (Patton, 2000). The final destination remains unique for each enquirer, nevertheless direction can be offered. An online presentation was created to provide instruction and an indication of how the qualitative data analysis would be conducted. Researchers viewed this presentation before coding began. There are a vast range of approaches to qualitative research analysis. These cover the linguistic tradition - which treats text as an object of the analysis and the sociological tradition which treats text as a window into human experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The work largely drew on one of the most popular versions of grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin's (1998) step by step guide.

The idea behind this is that theory which is constructed is more likely to resemble the "reality" studied than theory derived from a series of ideas and concepts based on experience, or else pure speculation. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that "grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action" (p. 12). This approach supports

the beneficial aspects of looking at this group through a bona fide perspective working with the group through its experiences as a working and constantly changing entity. The idea is to provide the researchers with a set of tools with which to approach the research and enhance both their confidence and their creativity. In qualitative research there are no clear cut stages; data collection and analysis will overlap. However, in grounded theory, the literature review and data analysis should not interweave until the final stage of data analysis. The process involves four basic steps: open coding, axial coding, process analysis and selective coding. Each analytical step is punctuated by additional data gathering designed to check working hypotheses (i.e., coding decisions) as they emerge. Whereas quantitative research methods generally rest on deductive reasoning, or move from the general to the specific, qualitative methods generally rest on inductive reasoning, moving from the specific to the general. The outcome of this type of research is to create order of disorder (Hawes: 1975; Turner, 1970). Each person responsible for coding was asked to review the transcription of five interviews and the field notes. The participants' identities were concealed in order to preserve their anonymity. Each interview was conducted by the researcher and was based on the Individual Interview Protocol (See Appendix C). The coders were asked to explore the data by reading through all of the information to obtain a general sense of the information. They were then asked to look for critical terms, key events, or themes, which they would then note. Coders re-read the textual data paying particular attention to the areas which they highlighted. They then indicated any pertinent themes - conditions which reflect any causes, contexts, conditions, actions/interactions and consequences. Bringing process into the analytical picture is an important element of any grounded theory (Strauss and

Corbin, 1990, p. 143). In executing a process analysis, one must systematically note several things in the textual data: changing conditions over time, actions/interactions that are responses to the changing influences, consequences of actions/interactions over time and how consequences become conditions for the next actions/interactions (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). So how is process captured? It helps to focus on incremental changes, steps, stages or phases; or repeating cycles or spirals. Coders were asked to consider any dimension of rate, shape, direction and ability to control as the textual data was reviewed and to note any remarks on the left margins. This allowed for rich data and an elaborate system of code categories. Selective coding is challenging because it forces the researcher to commit to a single core category and build a descriptive story of the data from that core seed. The coders met to discuss both the codes and themes that were identified; similarities and differences were reviewed and thoughts and ideas were compared. As a result, the prominent theme elicited from the research was the drastic effect that power dynamics played in the construction of each individual's identity, as well as the group identity and how that played out in their efforts to engage in social justice. (See Appendix E).

## **Insights**

Recognizing the influence of power dynamics within the context of social justice, Putnam and Stohl (1990) note that one of the most effective ways to explore the group dynamics is to look at how power is utilized to consider how new group members are integrated into and become part of the pattern of activities of a group (p. 4). Within the WRG, different individuals exhibited different ways in which they used power. The group was comprised of six women and six men. All maintained high grade point averages in communication studies, international studies or political science studies. Each was deeply involved with and served as leadership on several other student organizations.

Because of Faith's role as organizer, the power which she held fluctuated. Within the context of her initial leadership she displayed a great deal of power in the way that she presented herself authoritatively at the meetings and in directing the other members. However, as time passed and other group members became more vocal, her power seemed to diminish as other members flourished. Though ultimately, she worked with individuals to decide who would serve on which committee and who would be responsible for making sure each individual had completed the assigned tasks. Teri, Omar, Richard and Ian all exhibited power throughout the meetings, each taking different opportunities to exert their positions and personal perspectives depending on the discussions. Tara only displayed a sense power when prompted as a result of her relationship with Faith. Power emerged as a result from the communication between the group and its members.

As noted, it is the goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own

socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities, of which they are a part. In working with each other as part of the WRG group as well as developing a social justice process for the issues they were to discuss at the NMUN, the students were forced to reflect on their own identities in relation to the social justice issues they were working to resolve. Students exercised power to get what they wanted as individuals, to move the group towards their positions and towards a social justice goal. The students used power to force action, participation and movement. In an effort to explore the ways in which power was used within the cultural dimension of this group, we utilize Hofstede's "Indicators of power distance for educational groups." (See Table 1)

## *Hierarchy*

The focus of this work is how the group members incorporated their own personal socialization experiences as a part of the group. Power is explored as members negotiated their own roles within the group and how they maneuvered within the confines of what each felt was a social responsibility and how the group navigated towards social justice. Faith was a vocal and dynamic, White, female student who strongly insisted that she be president. Pete, a markedly vocal, White male, repeatedly stated that he was entirely too busy to take over leadership of the group and said that he was thrilled that he did not have to take on any additional responsibility. As members joined and the group was formed, Faith took control of the meetings. The first three meetings were quite a challenge for the members. While Faith was assertive as a leader, it was difficult as seven of the twelve each represented leadership within their own organizations and all had very strong ideas of how to proceed. This was further complicated in that four of the twelve had great knowledge of international affairs and two others had been involved with NMUN and had a working knowledge of those processes. It took those first three meetings of lengthy discussions to establish a trust among the twelve. There was a great deal of negotiation in those first meetings as each participant was challenging the others to determine who could most effectively lead the group and to also determine that they could feel comfortable within the organization and that their peers would meet or exceed their own contributions. Most of these initial discussions centered on the rights and power inherent within the role of the executive committee of the organization and the responsibilities which should be held by the roles created, or as Hofstede (1990) posited, the hierarchy. Several references were made by separate individuals at different times alluding to their

own successes with different organizations. When deciding on which positions should be included on the executive committee, Amber, a Black female who had participated in their regional MUN as the head delegate for her high school, was adamant that the executive committee follow the example of the typical MUN format with a Chairman and Sub-Committee Chairs. Todd, a White male who had created and developed a Greek fraternity on the campus and was familiar with what was necessary to gain funding and access to resources at the university, felt strongly that a board with a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer would best serve the needs of the WRG. He argued, “If it is good enough for the United States, then it should be good enough for everyone.” Ultimately, Faith and Pete, who had also had some exposure to the campus’ student organizational resources aligned with Todd, and the structure he suggested was adopted.

As this project outcomes were considered, an interesting micro- and macro-perspective became clear. At a micro-level, within the group’s dynamic, there was a sense that whatever path would lead to the most money or better resources was considered the most successful. Hofstede (1991) proffers that this hierarchy is based on formal position, expertise, reward and the ability to give rewards. Consideration was never given to Amber’s idea and ultimately, she was less and less vocal through the subsequent meetings. While the president-based executive committee did offer some advantages to the group while at the meetings on campus, the fact that no one had been named as a “Head Delegate” caused friction during the first day while in New York as group members all fought and argued about who would be the head delegate. More because of situation and timing, then actually realizing a consensus, Pete would serve as the WRG’s Head Delegate to the NMUN conference. At a macro-level, this played out in

a fascinating manner. Todd had accepted the assignment as the Jamaican delegate to the General Assembly's Second Committee (GA2) where one of the three topics that would be discussed was, "Assuring developing countries rights over their natural resources." During the course of discussion of the topic during the conference, Todd was unable to move forward to a successful resolution in part because he had aligned with the larger national powers that refused to acknowledge the rights of those countries which did not have a presidential basis of power. The group refused to work with those nations that had a different idea of political organization. This occurrence is the reflection of the circumstance that continued to be reflected throughout the project. Those beliefs and values which help to inform individual and group identity would go fairly unnoticed by each participant within the workings of the WRG but manifested themselves in ways that directly affected social justice outcomes at the NMUN conference that the group attended.

## *Inequality*

Another insightful incident relates to Hofstede's inequality in that whoever holds power is correct and criticism or disagreement is never expressed. Faith continually began each meeting attempting to introduce each member of the group and to loosely outline the purpose of the meeting. Though he continued to share openly with the group his lack of desire or willingness to formally take over leadership, Pete constantly interrupted Faith, to either stop her from making introductions of members that he felt unnecessary or to move her forward in a discussion if he felt she was taking too long to make her point. For the first three meetings, there was an appearance that Faith was "in charge." However, there was a pivotal point in the fourth meeting: Faith arrived late and in her absence, Pete started the meeting without her. When Faith walked in she was visibly upset. She slammed her books on the table, interrupted Pete in the middle of his address and grabbed the keyboard which operated the overhead computer from him. Pete laughed out loud which riled Faith even further. In an attempt to defend herself she began to pose questions to the remaining group members about who was supposed to be in charge. Pete interrupted her again and mocked her leadership by telling the group that there was no way they had any chance of success if Faith continued to lead the group. The group immediately began to urge Faith to concede and that it was in the best interest of the group to have Pete act as leader. Faith had an immediate reaction and began agreeing almost simultaneously with the group that Pete should be the leader. The members of the group, who had never seemed dissatisfied or expressed any dissatisfaction with Faith's leadership, oddly exhibited a sense of relief that Pete was leading the group which reflected perhaps that the group valued a different type of

leadership. This was quite confusing because Pete not only had orally expressed his lack of desire to be the leader but lacked the knowledge that Faith did of the NMUN policies and procedures. Faith had worked with the NMUN administration (under the direction of the faculty advisor) and was intimately familiar with the deadline dates, the form and protocol of the paper submissions and the process which had to be followed in order for our delegation to meet with the Jamaican Ambassador to the United Nations. Pete accepted the title of “President,” and did indeed lead the meetings. However, Faith continued, with no direction from Pete and primarily on her own, to ensure that the appropriate forms and papers were submitted in their due time. The work that she did went virtually unnoticed and certainly unappreciated. However, without her completing those tasks, the group would not have been able to participate in the NMUN to the level that they ultimately did. At the micro-level we see this often, people who are seen as powerful are those that the individuals of the group will see as “right.” It might be thought that having a say is a matter of being empowered by someone else, of being given skills and space by someone more powerful. But this is misleading. To have a say is, precisely, to challenge the more powerful and the silencing of that voice is an aspect of hegemony and the gender disparity which is part of our socialization. Faith never openly opposed Pete or the group members. When asked in the individual interview about her thoughts regarding this issue, she shared that she was upset that the group had lost their faith in her but that she wanted what was best for the group and since they wanted Pete as a leader, she was willing to make the change. Pete neither saw nor ever acknowledged that this was anything but “things being set right.” While this gender dynamic was played out in several ways within the group, it was also evidenced with members of the groups

while in New York City at the conference where as groups formed the male members of the caucuses were the most vocal and assumed leadership roles at a four-to-one ratio, even though the conference itself was attended at a sixty-to-forty percent ratio of males to females. While many arguments have been made that this is merely an extracurricular event and that these are “just” college students, the fact remains that a high majority of these students are at the top of their classes academically and are instructed throughout the preparation period that they are to conduct themselves as the actual ambassadors would. It is therefore interesting to see the flirtations between the male and female conference attendees where the opinions of the females were discounted. There was an incidence where a female student who was an astute participant and came thoroughly prepared to argue for her position on the topic at hand. She had been making great headway to organizing a coupe and coming to a point where she would be able to introduce a proposal to the chair and committee. Instead of making arguments for their positions or debating politics, three male students from an international university organized a plot where they would ask her out to lunch and then distract her so she would not make it back in time to present her proposal before the deadline. She was flattered at their invitation, had lunch with one of the men and did not make it back in time to present. The men were able to put their much less prepared proposal through in her absence. This example particularly struck me and left me wondering truly if this may well be how international politics work on a global level?

### ***Subordination***

Each participant brought with them experiences that determined their place within this group. These individual experiences informed the power structure as the group developed an organized platform for their social justice work. As the president of another student organization, Ian was an asset because of his vast experience with Robert's Rules of Orders. The relationship between Ian and Pete was contentious as he served to correct him and therefore undermine his power. Tara, a close friend of Faith, was the eldest of the group (by only a few years) and shared in other group experiences with most of the members of the WRG. She was very protective of Faith and was the only one to validate her when questions arose. Amber grew exceedingly quiet and unlike the majority of the group would eventually have to be called upon to speak. However, she had a thorough knowledge of the United Nations. There was one specific incident where the group was discussing one of the UN committees and its topic. A lengthy discussion was had and a zealous debate ensued regarding the group's position. After forty minutes of this heated conversation there was a pause as tempers flared. In an effort to diffuse the situation, Faith asked Teri, who had remained quiet during this issue, her opinion. Teri calmly shared that Jamaica was not a member of this particular committee and would never be asked to take a position on this issue - an important fact overlooked by all the other members of the group.

Clarisse was talkative and outgoing and very opinionated. She was from a very small town of around 1200 and had never traveled anywhere until she began to attend college and then only traveled within the state. She was not afraid to vocally share her thoughts and opinions and was unapologetic for her steadfast belief in her ideas of right

and wrong. She was a self-proclaimed staunch Republican with strong Christian ideals which led to very interesting debates about world issues. There was a particularly contentious relationship between Clarisse and Richard, who was a young and liberal man who had shared openly with the group that he was homosexual. The remaining female member was Avery, who was inseparable from Clarisse both in space and attitude. One would not speak without consulting with the other and neither would go anywhere without the other. Cliff provided comic relief for the group both during the meetings and the conference. His perceived nonchalance and disregard for the work that was being done was a constant source of anger and frustration in many cases with many of the group's members, though he was never reprimanded and the group generally was amused by his antics.

## *Privilege*

Another emergent theme was that most of the students generally were interested in very specific aspects as to what they wanted to learn about other cultures. While the students were intimately aware that this was a political conference which dealt with very profound and vital world issues, there continued to be issues with students only interested in researching entertaining and frivolous issues such as food, fun and folklore (Banks, 1993). The fact that students had visited the island of Jamaica later became problematic as students whom had originally seen the island as a plush playground were forced to look at its government and politics through a completely different lens therefore replacing picturesque and romantic perspectives with the much more stark and disturbing realities of a third world island country. A Black female commented on the research she had conducted which had begun as a general look at Jamaica's gross domestic product (GDP).

I have been to Jamaica four times with my parents and never saw anything but beautiful beaches and great food and like these totally amazing forests with lots of fun things to do and everyone always seemed so happy. I thought that since tourism was the way that Jamaica made money that everyone that lived there must have fun like that every day and even was thinking how cool it would to live there someday. But this is ridiculous... There is no tourism in places like Kingston, so there is no money there. I had no idea that there were slums in Jamaica!! I never saw any - not one!! Someone needs to do something about this.

A White female student shared her perspective.

You just saw what you wanted to see. Jamaica is always in the news for corruption... corrupt government, people getting killed with machetes over some kind of drug thing or other. We're lucky to be here in America where those kinds of things don't happen.

The first student arguably has a limited worldview and while we may not know the context of her visits, she offers a version of a visit to Jamaica that resembles one of

most Americans. As she stumbles on a more inclusive perspective, she indicates that she sees something wrong and intends that someone else needs to address the issue. The second student at first glance appears to have a more informed perspective, but while she seems to be aware of the reports of Jamaica's current events she argues that these actions are not prevalent in America. Two factors become increasingly clear: the first is an overarching sense of ethnocentrism and the belief in America's superiority and the other is a sense of obligation to do something, but that the responsibility for that "call to action" is someone else's. These students were unable to see past their own perceptions of Jamaica as a tropical paradise or as a dangerous drug war zone. Their individual perspectives of Jamaica were self-constructed but served as the "truthful" versions as each student was vested in their own perception. The students lacked sufficient historical knowledge to make sense of contemporary world structures. The importance of historical knowledge and awareness of current events are integral to the development of accurate accounting and awareness. In another example, Richard, who was a profound advocate for work needing to be done to eradicate poverty refused to work with anyone who did not own a laptop computer and never equated his lack of willingness to work with those that did not have the means to own a computer and the lack of resources of those individuals with working within a social justice capacity in working with impoverished nations and countries around the world.

Conversations moved smoothly and seamlessly between group organizational structure and logistical considerations and the wide array of NMUN world topics ranging from nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation to information and communication technologies for world development and from elimination of international terrorism and

illicit arms sales to the implementation of a global standard of education. Another one of the topics these students were responsible for was exploring peaceful resolutions to the Palestinian Israeli Conflict; some students felt their structured religious background proved problematic in working out solutions which, before the conference, seemed much less complex. The information they had access to from their parents, elementary schools and previous sources seemed to only serve to polarize their position. As one student offered:

I had always considered that my [Christian] religion was generally understood to be the basis for what is right and what is wrong. My parents, teachers and religious instructors taught me what was right and what was wrong, and I just imagined that this is what all children learned and how they learned it.

Global, international, nationalist and domestic U.S. conflicts are often posed in religious terms as theological clashes of good versus evil, such as the World War II struggle between democracy and fascism, the Cold War struggle between capitalism and the forces of so-called godless Communism, and the post-9/11 political, cultural and theological “war against terrorism” waged by the United States against “Islamic militants.” This point has been captured in Juergensmeyer’s (2004) maxim, “It is not so much that religion has become politicized, but that politics have been religionized” (p. 2). The student’s idea of this religious ethnocentrism helps us to more clearly note that during the past decade, religion interacts in important ways with ethnicity, class, gender and nationalism, and that we must consider the intersections of various dimensions of social identity (religion, ethnicity and ethnocentrism, racial formation and racism and class positions and conflicts) that have previously been considered in an either/or analysis that isolated one at the expense of the other. The process of bringing people together in

groups, such as the World Relations Group, to learn about each other supports Gordon Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis. Allport believed that members of different groups must possess equal status in their interaction, they must work together toward a common goal, the contact must be intimate enough to lead to the perception of common interests and shared humanity and the institution must sanction the contact.

## *Dependence*

One of the integral requirements for the conference is the creation of position papers, one-page assertions of each country's position. Students were aware of the committees on which they would serve and each committee was given three topics which would be explored, argued and in some way resolved. The students worked in independent pairs or triads to organize and formulate their positions and then provided the members of the group-at-large with their positions on the topics. Two teams within the group engaged in conflict as they interpreted the topics for which they were responsible. The first topic was implementation of a global standard of education and the second was the establishment of Islamic centers for education and professional training in war-torn areas. Collectively the group had explored facts about the land, people, history, government, political conditions, economy and foreign relations of Jamaica. The smaller groups each explored further information as necessary. The first group responsible for global standards had done extensive research and referred to an article from the Jamaican Ministry of Education, sharing that the island nation of Jamaica emphatically supported a global standard of education for preschool and primary elementary school. They further noted that according to the World Trade Organization that it was only in 1994 that Jamaica created an organization dedicated to advancing higher education. Jamaica is affiliated with the University of the West Indies (UWI) whose regional campus is in Kingston, Jamaica and the University of Technology (Jamaica Utech), which was previously known as the College of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST) and received university status in 1995, is Jamaica's only national university. By their accounts, leaders

were interested in moving these educational institutions forward under a global standard and urged all others to support this effort and coordinate their efforts globally.

The second group, under the direction of Richard, was given the charge of exploring Jamaica's position on the establishment of Islamic centers for education and public training in war-torn areas. They prepared a position paper and defended their work vehemently and aggressively. They announced very pointedly that Jamaica would absolutely not support such an initiative.

There is no way on earth that we will support initiatives to help educate and train terrorists. We have hardly any money to educate our own people yet alone send money all over the world to help people who want to destroy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We live in a country where anyone can be what they want as long as they want it bad enough and are willing to work hard enough for it.

In order to further highlight their position, the following is an excerpt from their position paper:

The Christians who first fled to the New World, sought an asylum from royal oppression and priestly intolerance and they determined to establish a government upon the broad foundation of civil and religious liberty. Every man must worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, but the virtues extolled in the Bible are the secret of power and prosperity. The oppressed and down-trodden throughout Christendom must rise against all others and any initiatives that would allow for Islamic terrorism.

The responses reflected a commitment to personal goal-oriented outcomes in highlighting the importance of democratic principles but utilizing inherent contradictions and hypocrisy of ethnocentrism and discrimination to undermine those very tenets. Without consideration of the scope of the topic, these students had read "Islamic" and understood that to have some semblance to terrorism. Their assertion lent to an exploration of some of the ways religion has shaped the cultural, social and political life

of the United States and has been used to justify the actions and policies of the dominant religious majority. Students had deeply held American assumptions about religious freedom and First Amendment constitutional protections that led to a reassessment of the roles of racism, ethnocentrism and classism in supporting systems of religious domination and subordination. For example, religious rhetoric is often used historically to justify race-based slavery in the United States, the tribal and cultural genocide of Native American Indians and the expulsions and incarceration of Japanese Americans. Turning to the present day, there is a constant barrage of media representations and religious profiling and the detention of Muslims and Sikhs. There is a marked perspective as it relates to the religious basis of opposition to gay marriage, stem cell research, abortion, immigration and whether or not prayer should be allowed in schools. In working toward social justice, these perspectives are held to firmly by the individuals who, because of these convictions, are unable to work towards a communicative resolution.

This ethnocentrism and sense of advantage also highlights an important aspect of one of the privileges of advantaged group status which is the luxury to simply see oneself as an individual. A White man, for example, is rarely defined by Whiteness or maleness. If he does well on his job, he is acknowledged as a highly qualified individual. If he does poorly, the blame is attributed to him alone. Members of targeted groups, however, can never fully escape being defined by their social group memberships. A Native American woman, for example, may wish to be viewed as an individual and acknowledged for her personal talents and abilities. Yet she can never fully escape the dominant society's assumptions about her racial/ethnic group, language and gender. If she excels in her work, she may be seen atypical or exceptional. If she does poorly, she may be seen as

representative of the limitations of her group. In either case, she rises or falls not only on the basis of individual qualities alone, but always also party as a member of the social group(s) with which she is identified.

After months of academic preparation and the rigorous demands of attaining collegiate funding for such an endeavor as a week-long conference in a major metropolitan city far from home, twelve students departed to attend the NMUN Conference held in the heart of Manhattan. Attention must be drawn to the fact that of the twelve, there was one international student who had traveled fairly extensively to or through at least five countries. Only two of the students had traveled outside of the state and none of the eleven had ever been to a metropolis such as New York City. The experience of travel itself served as the initiation of a theme that would repeat itself throughout the time in New York. As the group waited for departure, a discussion began on which members wanted to see particular sites while in New York. It was decided amongst all twelve that some form of system should be enacted in order for everyone to keep track of the other members. After much debate about different tactics to employ, Pete announced that he would serve as the group's protector. There was some joking, but Pete continued to share his rationalization:

No one will have to worry with me in charge. I'm a big guy and I know how to handle myself. Those New York thugs won't know what hit them if they want to mess with this Hoosier or any of you. Ladies, you just stick with me and I'll make sure that nothing happens to you.

During the discussion, Tara had attempted to promote Faith as a contact person, because of her knowledge of NMUN, but she was all but ignored. The only acknowledgement she received was from Faith, who stated:

Oh, Teri, Pete's probably right. My dad said that I'm too pretty to be in New York alone. I am terrified and am happy knowing that Pete will take care of us while we are there. It's all right, I will take care of anything anyone needs inside the hotel and Pete can take care of us outside.

Though there seemed to be some discord with this plan, all the group members eventually submitted to the collective decision. While there are several factors that could be measured, including the student's perception of New York and its inhabitants, the correlation of body type and ability to defend one's self or others and perhaps the impact of parental counsel and direction, it is the issue of sexism that relates to social justice with which we take under consideration. Throughout the conference, there were several instances where Faith deferred to Pete. One remarkable example was the decision on which member of the delegation would submit the final position paper to the conference committee. Faith had worked diligently on collecting information from all of the topic committees within the WRG and spent several hours editing and confirming sources. She had certainly invested the most time and energy towards its completion. However, at the time of submission, she stated that she was perfectly comfortable with the group's decision that it would be Pete that would walk the paper up in front of the assembly.

In addressing the issue of sexism, it is vital to consider the impact of much more than just being male or female and that there are many contextual elements that are relative. But, the tendency to heighten the power of men as a group continues to evolve and children under the rubric of "progress and democratic development" continue to inform all of our attitudes and behavior toward our own gender and those of other genders. Today we see the effects of this all around us, such as the increased incarceration of women (of color), the abuse of women and child workers through global trade agreements that keep women and their families in poverty, the growth of the sex

slave trade of young girls and the backlash against feminism and anti-sexist organizing the growth of conservatism and “traditional family” values. The system that allows for the existence of this patriarchal tendency is usually described as sexism. Here sexism is defined as a system of advantages that serves to privilege men, subordinate women, denigrate women-identified values and practices, enforces male dominance and control and reinforce forms of masculinity that are dehumanizing and damaging to men. Sexism functions through individual beliefs and practices, institutions, images and ideas and is enforced by economic structures, violence and homophobia (Blood, Tuttle and Lake, 1983; Griffin and Harro, 1997; Johnson, A., 1997; Pharr, 1988).

Although sexism impacts all women and men, it does so differentially through access to financial resources with White/European ancestry as a significant factor cushioning the impact. Men are both privileged and damaged by sexism. In many cultures around the world, norms about leadership and power position men to control resources and decision making in relationships, the family, economics and politics and position women to serve men physically, emotionally and sexually. In a later interview, Pete noted his self-appointment did scare him, but he felt that he did what he needed to do. Also, there were several males who felt uncomfortable or ostracized and not sure if they were to be included under the “protection” that Pete had offered, because he had specifically addressed his role to the “ladies.” Cliff particularly was offended at the insinuation that he needed protection, was upset that he wasn’t considered for the role as protector and though he followed the system upon which the group agreed, was vocal and expressed anger in his interview. When asked why he had not shared his disagreement to

the group he was dismissive and stated that...”If Pete wanted that responsibility, then I wasn’t going to fight him for it - he could have it!”

## REFLECTIONS

There are countless formal and informal ways to collect assessment information to explore power dynamics and social justice. There are many challenges faced in conducting research related to a university student organization. However, this project was about the importance of the intersection of individual and group identity, power dynamics and social justice. I close this section with the acknowledgement that social diversity and social justice education involved journeying into life experiences that are often fraught with fear, suspicion, lies and shame. Questions that may seem innocuous, such as “How do you contribute to the group” or “Describe your social identities,” can pose a crisis to each member of the group. The students all most assuredly had a sense of purpose. They were all intelligent, well-spoken and well-meaning individuals all committed to making their world a better place and all of whom I am honored to have had the opportunity to learn with and from. To know each of the group members means to maintain an attitude of respectful awe at the range, diversity and elasticity of human experience.

Throughout the project I attempted to modify existing representational models of how each person’s identity and the group’s identity(ies) worked together to inform the social work in which they engaged and how that in turn affected their personal and group identities and found it extremely difficult to work with existing models. At first glance, the visual representation model offered by Anderson, Martin and Riddle (2001) of group socialization which is typically used more to define why we join groups. The Anderson model utilizes five wheels to represent five phases of socialization. While the intention is to indicate that socialization is cyclical, the use of the more linear format reflects

membership as finite or self-contained. As the project progressed and the theme of social justice using the fluidity and interdependence of bona fide group perspective to consider how power was reflected in each individual's identity and the group identity emerged, I have found that it isn't enough that we examine why we join groups, but what happens by virtue of our group membership and how that affects our individual identity and what we do with that. Since we are considering this group from a bona fide perspective with a central concentration on interdependence and fluidity, I move that a spiral is much more compelling and significant. Spirals offer a more fluid sense of the constant and cyclical nature of groups in a wide variety of sense, but for the purposes of this study - very pointedly about how our individual and group identity influences social justice. There may be some spirals that merge; some might be very compact and short while others might be encompassing and much larger and longer. The idea of spirals is not new to American Indians who are conscious and aware of the cyclical nature of life and those processes we engage in to live life to its fullest. Davis (1990) in speaking of the transformation and changes of Native American culture specifically calls attention to the spiral as a shape that has fascinated humans since ancient times. She notes the scientific order that spirals represent as logarithmic, in that the distance between the turns increasing as the shape becomes larger. But more importantly these first symbols drawn on the planet were thought to represent the human cycle, a cycle that includes birth and death, love and despair and the general consideration that everything in life has a living cycle which waxes and wanes. There is a spiral nature to the work we do, as academics, as we continue to study important processes which we look to improve through the work we do. As an American Indian scholar, I maintain that it is integral to the work that I do

that those influences are seen in all my work and not just along stereotypical academics classifications. Everyone expects to see American Indians in historic or anthropologic classes, but applying American Indian philosophy and practices to this study of group communication lifts our discipline while calling well-deserved attention to relevant and relatable aspects of group communication. It is vital that we continue to include different voices in our academic endeavors and most critically when that work surrounds the central idea of engaging in practical and applied social justice. In his work, Hall (1989) calls attention to the various difficult issues in methodology in a study of Native Americans' history in a sociological context. He relates that Americans see history as linear with a specific start, usually at the time of the Pilgrims landing or sometime around the formation of the colonies and present day being a type of "end" time. This is a critical issue from a historical Native American perspective because it negates all Native American history prior to these "start" times. Though the greater issue certainly needs to be further discussed, for this work, the point that is pertinent to perspective is its relation to the great difference in cultural attitudes towards the past. Hall (1989) argues that Native Americans see time in a spiral sense where the past is the present, which is the future, which is the past and a relativity to natural events. Time is relative within context and is also fluid - much as Putnam and Stohl (1990) have constructed their bona fide group perspective. Within any bona fide group, there are times when membership into the group may remain on the same plane but progresses either forward or back, depending on circumstances. Therefore, the spiral is a much more poignant visual representation of group membership and I offer what I call the Spiral of Identity, Interaction and Influence (See Figure 1). It is my hope that the results of this study will draw attention to the need

that as our identities influence the work we do in social justice, that the spiral continues and that our social justice efforts transform our individual and group identities so that we become all the more productive and effective in the vital work that is social justice.

Figure 1

**Spiral of Identity, Interaction and Influence**  
Highlights the intricate nature and connectedness of personal identity with the interaction with and influence by and of people in our lives.



If the analysis is expanded using this spiral model we can consider the implications of identity and the negotiation of power given the bona fide nature of the group. The first consideration is the perception of the group's stability. In group communication, power is generated through relationships. Those relationships are dynamic and constantly changing as with all interpersonal relationships. As individuals feel either connected or disconnected to and within the group their attitudes toward leadership and who is in power change. While the group may be stable, there are permeable group boundaries which are continually reorganized based on the attitude of the group which is constructed by each person within the group. As these relationships are fluid, so power is fluid as it relates to the group.

Identity plays a significant role also within the conception of power. The relationship between identity and power has important consequences specifically within an organization that is emulating an organization such as the United Nations in a modern world that is changing rapidly through global immigration trends. Studies of ethnic/racial conflict of ethnic identity and power sometimes become necessarily studies of political power, social status, school achievement and allocation of resources. The recognition of power by students at several different levels provides interesting and important insights into the dilemmas faced by all students. Students first introduced to the WRG organization came with their own ideas of who they were, what they knew and what they intended to contribute to the WRG and also what they would take away. The knowledge and experience that they brought with them to their first meeting influenced their relationships and their own level with comfort or discomfort with accepting or acquiring some form of leadership within the group's role. The meetings and continual

communication with the group members helped to inform alliances or rivalries. Those relationships then manage and inform a new sense of identity which cyclically affects the idea of who is in power. It is a commanding message that emerges that invites reflection about the self-identification processes and that allows a deeper understanding of the empowering consequences of a clear and strong personal, cultural, ethnic and social identity, which reflects the second characteristic of bona fide groups, the interdependence of a group with its relevant contexts.

Conversations continued around the idea of “learning something about somewhere we don’t know” and “being able to change things for the better,” or in more accurate terms, social justice. On their own, the students came to understand that social justice is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. The vision includes a society in which individuals are both self-determining as they develop their full capacities and interdependent as they are capable of interacting democratically with others. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility towards and with others, their society and the broader world in which we live. These are conditions for American society, but also for every society in our interdependent global community. The process of attaining the goal of social justice should also be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change. Power cannot be achieved with coercive tactics, but instead with Kreisberg’s (1992) goal for enacting

social justice, “In a ‘power with’ versus a ‘power over’ paradigm” (p. 167). The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part. Developing social justice process in a society and world steeped in oppression is no simple feat. For this reason, we need clear ways to define and analyze oppression so that we can understand how it operates at individual, cultural and institutional levels, historically and in the present. Although inevitably an oversimplification of a complex social phenomenon, hopefully we can make sense of and act more effectively against oppressive circumstances as these arise in our teaching and activism.

The knowledge and experience of interactions with other groups had a direct impact on the power dynamics of the WRG. Each student had their own spirals of activity, education and participation in other groups, but even if for only the time they were together, they were spiraling together. The World Relations Group was organized to learn more about international politics and diplomacy. The students studied for months about world politics, but the real lesson on power came as a result of their group interaction. With this focus on the WRG from the bona fide perspective, a wide variety of multi-faceted aspects of power dynamics became evident and identity and negotiation of group communication and boundaries, communicative strategies and tactics were seen as very important because identities are expressed through language and discourse is the means available to organization members for negotiating various power structures. Ultimately the reason we look at power and influence tactics is to determine how those

affect any change in identity and how those changes affect the group as a whole and the work that they are able to do. While Faith worked to organize the group and initially called everyone together, there was a power shift amongst all members of the group. Those times where Faith attempted to dictate, failed miserably. In spite of Pete's continual objections, he ended up leading the group. The group functioned at its best when leadership merely facilitated a flexible environment where power was shared by the group. As Keyton (1999) noted, "When a leader can facilitate the process in such a way as to not sacrifice anyone's interest, it is more likely that all members, including the leader, will have opportunities for equal input and shared decision making"(p. 242). This concept allows power to be nonzero-sum in nature and an increase in one's power does not diminish the power of another. If we consider a group is successful when it meets the needs of the members of the group, then it is inextricably linked to its interaction and communication processes. While some would argue that the most effective leader is one who exhibits the most power, I would contend that more important to social change is that the most effective and productive groups have a leader that shares power. The inherent contradictions and hypocrisy of racial discrimination undermine the democratic principles this country espouses, have motivated people in each generation to critique, resist and struggle to change them (Takaki, 1998; Zinn, 1995). A great deal can be learned from studying previous activism and the backlashes to it so as to build organizations, coalitions and movements that may be more flexible and durable in countering or thwarting regressive policies of the future. Many Americans, particularly White Americans, believe that the playing field has been leveled and our society now operates as a meritocracy in which, despite race or station, anyone willing to work hard

enough can get ahead. Yet job discrimination, pay inequity and the enduring legacies of past discrimination continue to sustain a hierarchy of racial privilege and disadvantage in all areas of life - employment, health care, housing, media, education and politics (Oliver and Shapiro, 1997). By masking these ongoing advantages, color blindness maintains structural racism and ultimately undermines democratic potential. Racism is not only a Black-White issue but also affects everyone in our society - White, Black, Latino, Asian, American Indian, biracial and multiracial people - in its allocation of social advantage and disadvantage.

The entire purpose of this organization was to partake in a conference dedicated to working out global issues. Among dozens of other questions, the students were asked to work on solutions to issues like breaking the links between diamonds and armed conflict, global management of water resources and cultural sensitivity in the universal promotion of human rights. These issues are crucial, timely, relevant and overwhelming. The philosopher George Santayana (1905) imparted that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. During World War II, Asians, American Indians, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Arab Americans and other people of color, though not often acknowledged in the history most students learn in high school, joined Whites in the war effort to protect democracy (Orfalea, 2006; Takaki, 1998). Yet, African Americans, many of whom had family members in the armed forces, were subjected to racism in the military and segregation and lynching back home (McGuire, 1993). Some Japanese Americans, even as they were categorized as suspect aliens and imprisoned in camps, enlisted to serve (Asahina, 2006). Soldiers of color who fought against fascism returned home to encounter discrimination restricting their ability to utilize GI housing

and education benefits that White soldiers could freely use. Unearthing this history is an important part of the social justice struggle. As Parrish-Sprowl (2000) notes, “The process of enacting successful macro-level societal change and transformation is difficult.” If you asked these students, they might say that may even be insurmountable. But this case study is a good example of why using the bona fide group perspective may help facilitate discussion toward making a change as we apply the macro- and micro-level themes.

These global issues will never be solved continent to continent or country to country. These issues will be solved people to people. However, working on issues from an individual perspective is impractical and unwieldy. The study of groups allows us to focus on pertinent issues in a manageable context and then relate those findings to a larger audience and affect greater change. It starts with a group like the WRG.

The students worked diligently studying the country of Jamaica. This work helped them to open their eyes to a different perspective, a different way of life. Putnam and Stohl (1996) frame the interdependence of a group with its relevant contexts as a result of four features. The first feature is intergroup communication. At a micro level the students not only had to coordinate within the group, but on a larger context within the NMUN conference. On a micro level, they represented Jamaica and implemented the communication practices and power dynamics they had honed during the regular meetings of the WRG. Over the course of seven months, the students incorporated all of the knowledge and experiences they had gained from all their other group involvements into their preparation for the conference. Throughout this process they developed a skill set for coordinating actions among groups and learned that tasks, especially complex

ones, demand that groups coordinate their actions together. The analysis here reflects an interesting twist on the relationship between micro - and macro-contextual issues with bona fide groups. At the micro level this meant working together to become better educated and employing what they had learned into better articulating their position as a group. At a macro level, this meant working with students from around the world and being able to create alliances. Different languages, cultures and personalities all entered into this process making these efforts even more challenging.

It is one thing to discuss a crisis, but something altogether different to work to create a solution to that crisis. In probably the most difficult lesson, the students learned to negotiate the boundary conditions of a group's purview. At a micro level this meant that each student was responsible to the group for getting their own piece completed. In those times and situations where a task was left undone or a group member had to resign, it was unfruitful and meaningless to point blame. A great deal of time was spent unproductively in assigning blame and also speaking to issues based on conjecture. The students recognized this loss and were able to identify this much more acutely at the macro level. The United Nations has no legitimate power within the governing of any country. While its bodies are able to make recommendations, they are unable to force action of or on any country. A frustrating component was the time spent in committees where member nations would attempt to create solutions outside their control. The students were able to engage productively in negotiating these boundaries and set parameters for what actions could and could not be taken.

One of the most important revelations was the manner in which the group made sense both individually and collectively of the intergroup relationships. At a micro level

this meant there were times that a student was working against another student and the WRG as a whole against other student organizations in competing for funding. This took on a completely different level on the macro level. Once at the conference, alliances shifted as did many of the power structures. While preparing for the different committees, several of the students were unaware of the differences in the structural significance and subsequent notoriety of the committees. For example, being on the Committee for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) was much more prestigious than being on the Committee for OIO (Organization of the Islamic Conference). The WRG students also had to contend with the lack of power as representatives from Jamaica. Jamaica is far from a world power and the WRG students had not anticipated that they would have so little a voice. An incredible discussion ensued regarding privilege after the conference. Two of the WRG members were not born in the United States. Todd was from South Africa and Ian was from a former Eastern European country. The dialogue was rich with how citizens from the United States see themselves and how difficult it was to truly represent a third world country from a U.S. perspective.

At the conference, there seemed to be a shift in power within the group. After seven months of intense preparation we arrived in New York ready to go to work. Each student was armed with a wealth of background country information, was well-read on the latest news and most current information on world issues and felt equipped and organized. After working so closely together, each student was on a different committee during the conference. For as united as the members of the WRG were prior to the conference, there was a shift due to the social and spiral nature of groups. Teri is an avid basketball player and when she met several Ukrainian basketball players her alliances changed and both

Faith and Tara were upset that she spent less time with the Jamaica delegation than the Argentina delegations (who were actually students from the Ukraine). When Pete and a delegate from Turkey found each other connecting personally, they attempted to form an alliance in committee in order spend time together - which would typically never have happen in a political sense within the actual committees within the UN (and, of course, their proposal was shot down.) These relationships show the intricate and delicate effect of communication and every attempt at engagement. Each member is a construct of their own environment. In joining a group, that member brings with them all their experience and knowledge which defines the group. In working within and without the group, theories become conceptualized and created and one can begin to project those outwardly with increased accuracy on a larger scale. It is through the study of bona fide groups that we can take what we learn and help to influence changes.

During each day of the NMUN conference, the students would meet at the end of the day so that everyone could share their personal experiences and strategize as to the sub-committees they were creating within the larger committees. While the students learned a great deal about Jamaica and current events, the findings really assert that the larger lesson learned was about group communication in context.

In the end, the several months of observations and interviews garnered more information than I ever imagined. Placing focus on one area proved INCREDIBLY difficult. There are so many remarkable areas to focus and so many rich sources of data. Ultimately though, findings must be confined to a reasonable amount. The bona fide perspective provides a framework for studying groups in a way that gives voice to concepts that did not exist before.

A focus on communicative strategies and tactics is important because identities are expressed through language and discourse is the means available to organization members for negotiating power. Power in group context should be nonzero-sum where one person's power does not diminish another person's power and could and should be used in creating more effective communication within the group. By emphasizing the increasing importance of communication, Fraser (1997) complicated the issue. What Fraser proposed are remedies that synergize a "politics of recognition" with a "politics of redistribution"; or more aptly put, politics that pays attention to how both economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres and in everyday life and cultural norms that are unfairly biased against some are institutionalized in the state and the economy" (p. 15). Fraser's model of social justice speaks explicitly to the tensions in social justice between issues of redistribution and recognition. The relationship between redistribution and recognition is complicated. The focus on recognition can distract from the ongoing exploitation of the marginalization and powerlessness of impoverished people, but an emphasis on redistribution does not necessarily challenge the underlying social structures that sustain and perpetuate unequal power relations (Bourdieu, 2002).

Examining how this dynamic plays out in social justice education reveals that a unique focus on how we teach and learn about the distribution of social goods, such as housing and healthcare in society at large and school funding, high-quality teachers and multiple curricular and extracurricular options in education institutions, can hinder efforts to address cultural imperialism issues in schooling. More specifically, educational redistributive arguments do not necessarily address how dominant values and beliefs

normalize and thus privilege middle-class, White, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, English-fluent, male students in most U. S. schools (Lynch and Baker, 2005). If the political economy is not part of the multicultural education dialogue and we ignore the histories of ethnic groups in the United States without addressing cultural and economic inequities across time, then the “poor” become one more cultural group for the “normal” class to “tolerate” which merely reinforces the inequality of the social structure and perpetuates the status quo (Britzman, 1998; Cornbleuth and Wauth, 1995; King, 2004). This also affects culturally subordinated groups who are forced to procure additional resources for the implementation of cultural revaluation and recuperation programs, such as Native American-centered programs that seek to recognize “culture, consciousness and aesthetics from institutionalized White cultural supremacy” (King, 2004, p. 351; Asante, 1991).

Because of the especially distinctive circumstances of this project where I served as a faculty advisor for a student organization, the study also presents a unique opportunity for me to offer several suggestions in the ways that we construct and organize student groups from a communication perspective. In an effort to facilitate awareness and action I offer several recommendations. We must be able to promote students’ self-examination. Interactive exercises are a powerful vehicle for promoting students’ awareness of the complexity and pervasiveness of inequalities. Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) present curriculum designs and modules that address and challenge racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism and anti-Semitism. Representative activities that target racism include placing students in small groups to: Identify the aspects of their own racial/ethnic heritage about which they are proud, review patterns in

their personal relationships regarding people from different backgrounds, articulate ways in which society supports racism, encourage frank and respectful dialog between students of different races and identify ways to take action. We have a responsibility to help students talk with others who are different through interview assignments. Students can learn more about the scope of oppression by interviewing people from marginalized groups, visiting their neighborhoods and exploring the quality of services (e.g., schools, hospitals, housing, transportation, recreational facilities and stores) that are available in their communities in contrast to those of privileged groups. There are incredible programs, such as the University of Michigan's Intergroup Dialogue that would provide structured settings for students with the express purpose of getting to know someone from a different culture. Students must be encouraged to speak out for change in social action projects. It is increasingly important for students to understand the connections between research, practice and public policy. These linkages have definite social justice implications. Service learning, in which students volunteer with underserved or marginalized populations and connect their site experiences to coursework, can be a transformative experience that furthers social justice, has a positive impact on reducing stereotypes, facilitates cultural and racial understanding and enhances civic responsibility. Service learning is most successful when students have opportunities for reflection and critical analysis through written assignments and class discussions that tie course concepts with field experiences.

Although students and faculty for that matter, commonly have access to programs or occasions that allow direct contact with people in need (e.g., assisting in hospitals or mental health facilities, tutoring at-risk children, volunteering in community centers that

serve lower-income populations), a commitment to social justice also involves attending to broader, societal dynamics evident in the placement. As such, students can reflect on the challenges faced by people who are served by the organization because of societal inequalities, or may volunteer at a site that focuses on advocacy or policy reform.

Activities may also involve students assisting a community organization or group by using psychology-relevant skills, such as completing a needs assessment or evaluating the effectiveness of a program. It is imperative that we continue to create campus-based assignments and groups that promote social justice. Other action-oriented assignments can be campus-based, such as contributing to university newspapers, creating or participating in relevant co-curricular activities, or conducting campus-wide education projects (distributing literature, encouraging political action among students). Ultimately, as professors, advisors and molder of minds, we can tailor the inclusion of social justice in a way that respects content areas, personal beliefs and the characteristics of students as a whole. The steps may be implemented gradually or in part. For example, students often welcome participatory teaching styles; they are also likely to be receptive to completing flexible social action projects or learning about and helping children. Regardless of the precise implementation, addressing social justice encourages students to understand individuals and communication processes within a broader framework. It also provides us a window to help create a more fair and tolerant society.

The social justice challenge is not just a question of process, but also one of outcomes and impacts the livelihoods of marginalized groups. Research certainly needs to continue to identify existing inequalities and their nature - but the real work true and authentic engagement to improve outcomes and redress benefit and power gaps for the

disadvantaged. What a student may gain from their college experience depends a lot on the campus on which they spend their time (Pascarella, 2001). Recognizing the uniqueness of the urban commuter student helps us understand the challenges and opportunities faced by students. Multiple life roles necessitate students to manage their time and choose carefully their experiences on campus as they developing a sense of belonging, a feeling of acceptance that differs from student to student. A campus that provides a support base for students offers venues and opportunities for developing personal relationships, including classroom environment that are conducive to learning. If a university's diversity office reports a total of only 15% minority students of the total student population on the campus, it is also imperative to consider the implications that attending a predominantly White institution has on its students, especially as you take into account the question of what it means to engage in social justice. The students interviewed all had various perspectives of the campus, different expectations of the administration and a range of reasons why they chose to attend college and more particularly, to participate as members of the World Relations Group. Understanding students' motivation to engage in social justice work requires an understanding of their unique experiences as students. The major themes that emerged from this study suggest that as part of an engagement in and of social justice education, both an interdisciplinary conceptual framework for analyzing multiple forms of oppression and a set of interactive, experiential pedagogical principles are required to help students learn and understand the meaning of social difference and oppression both in the social system and in their personal lives.

Another interesting aspect that was revealed was the students' perception in terms of the number of diverse students on the campus and its significance on general perception. When asked on a scale of 1-5, 5 being very diverse, how ethnically diverse do you believe this campus is, on the average, most White students reported that the campus was very diverse.

“Just walking around here, I might hear two or three different language. It's hard to know what ethnicities are on campus because you look at the ones from Asia and you don't know what section of Asia they are from and forget about the Africans and Arabs... You know that *many* ethnicities are being represented. (White female)

Perhaps the more troubling responses regarding campus community came from students who had difficulty making connections with other students. Their perceptions remind us that out-of-class experiences influence students.

“If you walk down the street out there on the sidewalk, no one looks at you. I hate it. They just stare straight forward and never look.” (White male)

The people here they don't talk to you. You don't talk to them. I try to make Black friends. I try to make White friends. I try to make African friends. Nobody wants to speak to me, so I'm like you know what? I'm not going to talk to anybody else. That is really how it is. You don't feel anything. You just go to class. If it wasn't for the student groups I'm in, I wouldn't talk to anybody. (Black female)

A number of students indicated a preference for interacting with students who were more like themselves. These choices to forego interactions with members of diverse populations result in a pattern of self-segregation among most students.

It seems like all the African Americans sit together. All the Asians sit together. It just seems like even though you have diverse, I don't know what causes it, maybe it's just maybe we just kind of flock to what we know best. (White female)

Blackburn (1978) determined that non-majority students are more likely to be aware of their minority status on predominantly White campuses and to view their campuses as places where meaningful connections and friendships are determined by race and background. as one of the male students of color noted, “I tend to gravitate toward people who are minorities, I don’t know if that is something to maybe make me feel more normal.”

Through observations and interviews of the WRG, place became a polarizing issue between and among students. While discussing locations on campuses as tentative meeting places students identified several “acceptable” locations identifying them as either “safe” or “unsafe.” Observations seemed to indicate that the most popular place for students to socialize are University College (UC), University Library and the courtyard. Students who have classes on the west side of the campus socialize in the Union Building (UB) or venture to the McDonald’s located in the Riley Hospital and chose not travel to the opposite side of campus. In the observations of the Union Building, perceptions indicated that most of the students who socialized in this area are immigrant students enrolled in the ESL program. Most students stated they would rather stay close to the buildings where they have classes because of convenience to labs, scheduled study group meetings and familiarity.

In contrast, when asked if students felt safe on campus, most students indicated they felt safe on campus but uncomfortable in some places. Students stated some building were not open to socialization. For example, one student stated, Herron and the ET buildings were not welcoming buildings. Another student claimed he felt uncomfortable.

He described these areas as “*a semi-social*” locations and believed UC was the only place where “*unscheduled time to socialize was available.*”

Some White students indicated they did not feel comfortable in the basement of the UC and would not socialize there. One student stated he feared entering a room or approaching a group of students that were not White and therefore would not socialize there. His comments lead to a discussion of Black Expo and his belief that it is not a place for White people because they were not welcomed. An African-American student responded that the Indiana State Fair is the “White Expo.” This discussion led to a deeper conversation about feeling safe in certain buildings and parts of the campus. A White male student noted:

It’s like when I have gone down to the lower level of University College... and there were many times that I was the only White person down there and this might sound really bad and I’m sorry. It wouldn’t have been a problem if I had been the only White person and there would have been only 5 or 10 Black individuals but there were times where there were like 30 or 35 and I was the only White person and I felt a little uncomfortable.

It was decided that the group would meet in a designated room within the university library in order for all the members to feel safe and secure. But, this dialogue serves as a reminder that the aspects of the physical environment from vast factors such as student’s comfort to lighting, room temperature, ventilation, acoustics, room color, distracting noises, seating comfort and placement, access to audiovisual technologies, room cleanliness and length of the meeting all affect the level of concentration and participation by each of the members of the group. This collaboration on where to meet as a matter of security and safety is significant when considering the practical applications of social justice. The members of the WRG group saw safety very

differently. The White members of the group experienced and identified safety as a sense that they were not in harm's way, in a physical sense. The students of color experienced and identified safety in a discernibly different manner and used examples of walking into a classroom and needing to determine if they were welcomed by the professor and/or students where no one looked like they did and they felt very alone. Consider the implications when the individuals of the group - all concerned with safety - are operating with dissimilar definitions of what it means to be safe. The question of safety came up not only in terms of where the meetings should be held on campus, but was felt much more acutely as students whom had never traveled outside of Indiana were brought to the Manhattan and had to navigate their personal space and safety in one of the busiest cities on the planet. Compounded with the multitude of languages spoken by students at the conference as well as the stark difference in observation of religious traditions, such as Muslim students requiring time and space to perform their Salaat, the students sense of insecurity manifested several times to stark fear. The youngest White female student saw a grouping of six Muslim men in kneeling positions on the ground and starting screaming and crying. Once she was calmed down, she was able to articulate that she wanted to go home because she thought there would be a terrorist action at the hotel. One female student initially refused to leave the hotel because her parents had warned her about what they termed as "rampant homosexuality" and she voiced openly their concerns that she was terrified that she might be sexually assaulted openly by lesbians. When it comes to matters of social justice, perception is reality. Misunderstandings are mutual. An innocent gesture can be maligned or stereotyped by the inconsiderate actions of one. We form impressions and judge one another based on brief encounters on what we believe, or have

been taught to believe, we know about the other group. Is the White student justified in being afraid of Muslims because she believes what her parents told her or the stories she saw on television newscasts? Are Muslims insensitive or rude if they verbally lash out at Americans who scream at them and call them terrorists? Does institutional racism prevent Muslims from enjoying the rights and privileges routinely taken for granted by Christians? There are no easy answers to these questions, but this type of research, which highlights how our individual and group perceptions of power affect our realities and how those differ when it comes to our own beliefs, is integral as we continue to work toward effective social justice engagement.

Most students interviewed in the study were identified because of their involvement in various campus organizations and activities. The majority described participation in these organizations as something important to them because they shared the same interests or values with other members. While most did not feel pressured to socialize within their same racial/ethnic group, many did not socialize outside their group. Still, some indicated that certain organizations subtly and overtly imply exclusivity.

When you don't see people that look like me in this group or focusing on things that are important to me then why should I join? I was told that XYZ organization was not for me. (Black male)

When asked how much time they spent on campus, most student leaders presented detailed schedules of courses, study time and participation in campus activities. In general, most students did not come to campus on a daily basis, particularly those who are employed off campus.

In the survey, students were asked about what they felt was the purpose of the World Relations Group and why they chose to participate. Students noted that they had wondered, “Is the WRG going to be a learning experience or an organization where I can hang out with friends? Do I get to visit the United Nations and party in New York? Will there be requirements I have to meet? Will I have to do much work? Will being in a group that gets to go to the United Nations be something that will look good on my résumé?” As stated, one of the premises of the NMUN Conference is that each school and/or university represents a country. Students were asked to generate a list of the countries that IUPUI would be willing to represent. The discussions about the purpose of the organization led to further ideas about cultural diversity and oppression including ideas of assimilation and acculturation. Students continued with questions such as, “Is the WRG an organization where students come together to learn about each other or is it a place where we will explore other cultures and learn who they are and explore their identity?” One of the White male students appeared to feel threatened by the latter.

I just don't think we need to go there. We may be able to learn about other cultures but that is not us. I mean... America is the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave and we have fought for those rights. I want to learn about international politics, but from an American perspective. If we can't represent America - then count me out... As far as those other countries... You're not welcome... Being some other country just means *we have to tolerate* everyone.

His response caused concern for the other White students who believed the WRG should have a more encompassing worldview. Pete, another White male, questioned perspective and felt strongly that the group needed to be more inclusive.

For me, I know that being in the WRG or going to NMUN is not going to solve any problems - but it is a start. If we only ever see things from our own eyes, we can't really make any changes. We need to be able to believe that we can solve these issues or they'll never be solved. It's not

like we are going to make everything better and we'll all be happy - but it gives us the opportunity of learning something about somewhere we don't know and maybe changing things for the better. From some of the stuff that I've heard from people that have gone to the conference before there is a lot less work to do with the smaller countries too.

This conversation was pivotal in the way that it established the student as somewhat of an authority for the other students, though interestingly enough, he had never attended the NMUN. Also, many saw him as vocal enough to stand up against the first outspoken White male but sympathetic in the way he advocated for being more inclusive. This would serve as the basis for several subsequent conversations and confrontations that would take place between these two White males throughout the project. There were initially students that assumed that the group would represent the United States initially and found it difficult to understand why members would want to represent a country other than the United States. However, the moment Steven shared his perspective, these same students immediately sided with Pete. In a later interview, a White female shared her thoughts.

I guess I didn't think about it much. I'm an American and that is what I know. I guess I knew that we had to represent a country and I just kinda thought I wouldn't have to do as much work if we were the United States. But once Steven started talking about other people not being welcome, it just sorta (sic) scared me. I don't want to be one of those White people that don't like everyone. I mean, I've taken Spanish for like five years and I have lots of Black friends. I like everyone and I didn't want anyone thinking that I was prejudiced or something. Besides, Pete seemed to know what he was talking about.

Thinking in more broad terms about the intersection of individual and group identity(ies) is complicated by the ways in which identities are co-constructed and assigned meaning within oppressive systems. In the United States, Americans are socialized to view life in individual terms; the Constitution and public ethos enshrine and

celebrate the rights of individuals. Yet, as Young (2009) suggests, in what meaningful sense can anyone say that a self “stands free from history and social affiliations?” As members of human communities, our identities are fundamentally constructed in relation to others and to the cultures in which we are embedded (Bakhtin, 1981; Epstein, 1987; Rogoff, 2003). In a very real sense, it is impossible to separate our individual identities from our socialization within various social groups and communities. Oppression cannot be understood in individual terms alone, for people are privileged or oppressed on the basis of social group status. One of the privileges of advantaged group status is the luxury to simply see oneself as an individual. A White man, for example, is rarely defined by Whiteness or maleness. If he does well at his job, he is acknowledged as a highly qualified individual. If he does poorly, the blame is attributed to him alone. Members of targeted groups, however, can never fully escape being defined by their social group memberships. A Haitian woman, for example, may wish to be viewed as an individual and acknowledged for her personal talents and abilities. Yet she can never fully escape the dominant society’s assumptions about her racial/ethnic group, language and gender. If she excels in her work, she may be seen as atypical or exceptional. In either case, she rises or falls not only on the basis of individual qualities alone, but always partly as a member of the social group(s) with which she is identified. Conditions of oppression in everyday life become normal when we internalize attitudes and roles that support and reinforce systems of domination without question or challenge. As Audre Lorde (1984) so eloquently put it, “[T]he true focus of revolutionary change is to see the piece of the oppressor inside us” (p. 123). Both those who are advantaged and those who are targeted play roles, albeit different ones, in maintaining systems of oppression and challenging

and changing those systems. Social justice education begins with people in both advantaged and targeted groups dismantling oppression and generating visions for a more socially just future. The specific standpoints of particular social groups are valuable places to begin. Groups of people who share targeted status can build solidarity, articulate an analysis of power from the particular vantage point of their group, use this to analyze policies and practices that support oppression and generate alternatives to the status quo. Coalitions among different groups can then develop these strategies further by drawing on the energies differential insights and diverse avenues to power of coalition members. As historical circumstances change and newly emerging social networks take up issues of oppression in the United States and throughout the world, new definitions and understandings will evolve. Through highlighting the historical and contextual nature of these processes, we can hope to avoid the danger of reifying systems of oppression as static or treating individuals as unidimensional and unchanging. History illustrates both how tenacious and variable systems of oppression are and how dynamic and creative we must continue to be to rise to the challenges they pose. With student groups like the WRG and conferences like the NMUN force students to think outside the ethnocentricities of their individual and group identities and faculty dedicated to engagement in social justice and not just lecturing on its benefits, we can work to create potent and sustained impact for justice, fairness and equality not only on our campus, but in our world!

## LIMITATIONS

As with any study, the limitations are unfortunately many. The results of this study should not be generalized to all students, organizations, departments or schools. The sensitivity of the topics and the overall student organizational structure, limited the type of students interested in participating in an interview. Therefore, the major limitation to this study is the recruitment of participants through limited means. While every attempt was made to recruit through a wide-variety of means, including using affinity groups, listservs and email, our participants came from two significant campus sources or their instructors. This has the potential to create disproportionate representation of students who regularly read campus news in the sample or who represent certain schools. However, based on the results from the student and individual interviews, there is confidence that the sample is appropriately representational for the study's intent.

Some of the limitations of this study include external validity, or the generalizability of the study. There were a limited number of participants in the complete study and each participant was a college-degree bound student attending a campus in the Midwestern United States. Due to the small sample size, the data collected is from a few cases or individuals, which means that findings cannot be generalized to the larger population. The volume of data also makes analysis and interpretation much more open to researcher bias. To not acknowledge my own personal involvement with the group and its success as well as the fear of ethnographic and political perspective would also certainly be remiss.

It may be said that coding the social world according to operational variables, may destroy valuable data by imposing a limited worldview on the members of the group

studied so that even with the best intentions the themes may still reflect the bias of the researcher. The researcher functioned as the faculty advisor so even though contact was controlled as best as possible and influence was not intended, it would be irresponsible to denounce any effect of the researcher on the group.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Social justice work can be overwhelming. Once you have begun to identify issues and challenges - the work seems to be endless. Sometimes you are left feeling as if there is nothing that can be done. The only successful approach is to do one small thing really well otherwise you end up with many tasks left unaccomplished or poorly executed. My initial approach to this research was similar to the difficulties I have faced in my social justice engagement. I found that when I started tackling too many different issues in one project, it created a disconnected and unfocused study and so discussion centered around the most prominent of the issues, power. In looking at how the perspective of the students affected social justice, there was a wealth of information to be studied. It would be fascinating to explore how people join and leave groups and the concepts of introversion, extraversion and relationality; or for that matter, looking at each stage of socialization. Another area of study that would be compelling is cohesion and development and the factors that affect member satisfaction and adjustment, group dynamics and influence and group performance. The structure with its implicit and explicit norms or influence and how we distinguish between conformity, compliance, independence and anti-conformity would be incredible areas for further research. A more structured review of physical space and community or “groupness” would also be intriguing to explore further.

While I have worked to consider power dynamic within this work, a closer examination of leadership styles and effects would be fascinating to conduct. Within the realm of group communication, one could also explore the vast area of non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures, proxemics and influence, etc.). An entire body of work could be done on motivation and persuasion. Interpersonal relational and

compliance strategies would also be very well served with further study of this group. Following in the research footsteps of Dr. Sandra Petronio, this subject group would also provide an excellent source for a study of privacy as the group members not only worked together for a long period of time, but the experience culminated in staying for a length of one week in close quarters in a New York City hotel. Power only has meaning if it has the ability to influence and change behaviors. It is therefore crucial to explore the dimensions and process of influence as a result of power and the overarching power dynamic. I would be very interested examine their nine different dimensions of influence tactics as used by the members of the WRG. If not for time and so many other considerations, continuing on with a longitudinal study of the membership would also be exceptionally exciting and would provide a wealth of information as we continue to explore the viability and potential for a bona fide group perspective in working with groups in improving how we engage in social justice.

The language of power now offers me a way to talk about how group communication is organized around unequal relationships. I know how to better take stock of the privileges that are awarded or denied me and others based simply on the identities we were born with and am getting better at “reading” group power dynamics for the interests that group members bring to bear. Even when a decision seems very mundane, the question to ask is, “Whose interests are being served here and whose are not?” When trying to make sense of a group, specific questions that might be considered are: How are the people in this room different from one another in terms of identity and organizational status? How are these differences being played out in relationships? Another useful question is: What interests of my own am I trying to advance or protect in

this situation? During the conference, I was advancing two sets of interests simultaneously. In a practical sense, I wanted to ensure that all the participants were contributing to the group and that leadership of the activity was shared among the group members and that everyone collaborated on the development of the organization, but I also was incredibly mindful of my own research project. I also took time to collect my thoughts and carefully plan a response to any question directed at or to me. This decision to stay quiet served my own interests to avoid affecting the outcome of my own work but not necessarily those of others in the room. A final valuable question is: What interests might others be actively trying to advance or protect? In the original example I gave where Faith offered her personal insight into a racially charged question, no one else in the room directly confronted with their reactions. However, two group members - a White woman and a Black man - separately called me a few days later to talk about what had happened. Both said that they were offended by what Faith had said. Both said that they stayed silent because they thought a direct discussion about it would be uncomfortable for everyone and would take valuable time away from completing the group's assigned task. At the time that they called, their interest was in seeing that the comment was addressed with the whole group. Later, Faith explained to me that she was not sure what to say and only shared comments which she thought would make everyone in the group comfortable. Omar, the only Black member present at the time the comment was made, told me that he moved the conversation forward because we were in an "academic setting for research purposes." The way the comment was made did not strike him as racist and to construe it as such would have been, in his words, "hypocritical and

distracting.” A Russian male and a Hispanic female later commented that they were very offended by Faith’s comments. They did not disclose why they chose to stay silent.

In their study of feminist teaching in action, Maher and Tetrault (1994) organized their understanding of power relationships into several major themes. The theme they call “positionality” refers to a teacher or learner’s position in the classroom as defined by socially significant factors such as race, gender, ethnicity and class. Positionality implies relationship; that is, we are only privileged or marginal in relation to someone else. It was an eye-opener for me, after reading their work, to grasp that our identities are not fixed. For instance, I can be privileged in a group by virtue of my position as the leader or simply for being a White middle-class woman or a Native American student. However, if it happens that I am also a lesbian, or a senior citizen, or a physically disabled person, it is likely that some of my privileges will be undercut: such as the privilege to talk openly about my significant relationships or the privilege to have my credibility assumed. Our identities are defined within a shifting web of relationships according to Maher and Tetrault. Given the will of the group, power can be more equalized. Some believe that positionality, more than any other single factor, influences our teaching and learning (hooks, 1994; Maher and Tetrault, 1994). One additional concern of the social justice theme is to examine the material and non-material conditions that lead to and perpetuate the marginalization process of certain groups, which include political, economic and discursive means that render women as secondary in society, or place some groups as majority over minority populations.

Finally, it is imperative that I continue to broaden my own understanding of the breadth and depth of social justice. It is not enough to study or read more, but to continue

to deepen my understanding of the dynamics of oppression at the individual, group, cultural and system levels. I must continue my own personal work where I focus on my own multicultural incompetencies to manage strategies for my own ethnocentrism and reactions to personal triggers and work towards developing a positive identity.

## Appendix A

### IRB Information

IUPUI and CLARIAN INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR  
Exploring Group Membership Dynamics: A Case Study

STUDY PURPOSE

You are invited to participate in a research study of group membership dynamics. The purpose of this study is to determine how membership and influence help shape group communication. You were selected as a possible subject because of your interest in the IUPUI World Relations Group. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by IUPUI graduate student, Charmayne Champion-Shaw, under the advisement of Dr. Kim White-Mills as faculty coordinator as one of the requirements toward the completions of the M.A. in Applied Communication as defined by the IU School of Liberal Arts Department of Communication Studies.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

If you agree to participate, you will be one of approximately twelve (12) subjects who will be participating in this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

Your participation in the study involves completing a survey. You will also be asked to participate in an interview and potentially a follow-up interview. The interview will be held on the IUPUI campus and will last approximately 45 minutes. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed but your name will not appear in any written reports. The follow-up interview, if necessary, will be done over the phone. The questions on the interview have to do with your social and membership experiences at IUPUI, particularly as they relate to the World Relations Group organization. Some sample questions may

include: Please tell me how you heard about the World Relations Group? and What prompted you to join?

#### RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

Although not likely, there is a risk of being uncomfortable while answering some of the questions. If you feel uncomfortable, you can tell the research assistant that you feel uncomfortable or do not care to answer a particular question or set of questions.

Another potential risk of taking part in this study is loss of confidentiality. However, efforts (outlined below) will be made to keep your personal information confidential.

#### BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

The benefits to you personally include a level of knowledge of how research is conducted in the social sciences. IN addition, you may leave with better knowledge of your personal attitudes.

ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY: You do not have to participate in the study. There are not alternatives available.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. For example, your name will be kept separate from the information you give and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key. In addition, your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about this combined information. You will not be identified in these written materials. We cannot, however, guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study

may be published. Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the investigator and his/her research associates and the IUPUI/Clarian Institutional Review Board or its designees.

#### COSTS

There are no costs or compensation associated with taking part of this study.

Subject Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#### CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the lead evaluator, Dr. Kim White-Mills in the IU School of Liberal Arts, Department of Communication Studies at (317) 278-3199.

If you cannot reach the researcher during regular business hours (i.e. 8:00AM-5:00PM), please call the IUPUI/Clarian Research Compliance Administration office at (317) 278-3458 or (800) 696-2949.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information, or offer input, contact the IUPUI/Clarian Research Compliance Administration office at (317) 278-3458 or (800) 696-2949.

#### VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

## SUBJECT'S CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Printed Name:

Subject's Signature:

Date:

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent:

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:

Date:

## Appendix B

### Exempt Research Consent Forms

IUPUI/CLARIAN INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) REVIEW  
EXEMPT RESEARCH CHECKLIST

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**DIRECTIONS:** This form is to be neatly typed and submitted to the IRB only when the investigator is contemplating the initiation of a research project which, in the investigator's judgment, is exempt from full IRB review. The IRB will then determine whether the activity is covered by these regulations.

Research activities are exempt from regulations for the protection of human research subjects when they are considered minimal risk (the probability or magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests (as defined by 45 CFR 46.102(i)) and the ONLY involvement of human subjects falls within one or more of the exempt categories listed below.

The exempt categories outlined below do not apply to research involving prisoners or research involving a test article regulated by the FDA, unless the research meets the criteria for exemption described in 45 CFR 46.101(b)(6) and 21 CFR 56.104(d). Additionally, research involving pregnant women that is conducted at or funded by the VA cannot be exempt.

The exempt categories outlined below are based solely on methods of research, and

do not take the level of risk into consideration. Although most exempt research requires no further oversight to be conducted ethically, some exempt research raises ethical concerns or requires measures to protect participants. As such, the IRB will not consider any research exempt that does not fulfill ethical principles reflected in the Belmont Report. These basic ethical principles are:

Respect for Persons (Autonomy) – individuals should be treated as autonomous agents and persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection.

Beneficence – Human subjects should not be harmed and the research should maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms.

Justice – the benefits and risks of research must be distributed fairly.

Research that otherwise would be exempt by federal regulations that raises ethical concerns or requires measures to protect subjects may be denied and/or moved to a higher level of review (i.e. expedited or full IRB review).

Check the appropriate category(ies) that applies to your research project:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special educational instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula,
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	or classroom management methods. [45CFR46.101(b)(1)]
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless all of the following are true:</p> <p>(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that the human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and</p> <p>(ii) any disclosure of the subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation. [45CFR46.101(b)(2)]</p> <p>NOTE: If the research involves children as participants, the research must be limited to educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement) and observation of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed. Research involving children that uses survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior when the investigator(s) participate in the activities being observed cannot be granted an exemption.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or</p>

observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2 above, if either:

(i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or

(ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter. [45CFR46.101(b)(3)]

If any of the above categories have been selected, answer the following:

Will you be audio or video recording?

No

Yes. Explain how it will be assured that the identity of the subjects and/or link to the information obtained or the information recorded about the subjects does not place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, insurability, or reputation:

We will not ask the interviewees to identify themselves by name nor will we record the person's name in conjunction with the data produced. Additionally we will use pseudonyms to identify the subjects. Further we will only be asking about normal organizational practices. We will not be interviewing or observing minors.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. [45CFR46.101(b)(4)]</p> <p>To qualify for this exemption, data, documents, records, or specimens must exist at the time the research is proposed and not prospectively collected.</p> <p>Provide a list of all data points that will be collected below or attach a data collection sheet.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:</p> <p>(i) public benefit or service programs;</p> <p>(ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs;</p> <p>(iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or</p>

	<p>(iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs. [45CFR46.101(b)(5)].</p> <p>The program under study must deliver a public benefit (for example, financial or medical benefits as provided under the Social Security Act) or service (for example, social, supportive, or nutrition services as provided under the Older Americans Act).</p> <p>The research or demonstration project must be conducted pursuant to specific federal statutory authority, must have no statutory requirement that an IRB review the project, and must not involve significant physical invasions or intrusions upon the privacy of the subjects.</p> <p>This exemption is for projects conducted by or subject to approval of Federal agencies and requires authorization or concurrence by the funding agency.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies,</p> <p>(i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed; or</p> <p>(ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural, chemical, or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the</p>

	Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
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	[45CFR46.101(b)(6) and 21 CFR 56.104(d)]
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IUPUI/CLARIAN INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) REVIEW  
EXEMPT RESEARCH CHECKLIST

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IRB Study #: IUPUI54064-7

Section I: Investigator Information

Principal Investigator: Kim White-Mills, PhD Department: IU School of Liberal Arts –  
Communication Studies

(Last, First, Middle Initial-----must have faculty/staff status or faculty  
sponsor must sign)

Building/Room No.: CA 307G Phone: (317) 278-3199 E-Mail:  
kwhitemi@iupui.edu

Co-Investigator/Student: UC LL006 Phone: (317) 278-8335 E-Mail:  
cchampion@iupui.edu

If this is a Student Protocol, List Name of the Student: Charmayne Champion-Shaw

Phone: (317) 388-7429-Home

Project Title: Exploring Group Membership Dynamics: A Case Study

Sponsor/Funding Agency: N/A PI on Grant:

Sponsor Protocol #/Grant #:                      Period: From:                      to

Sponsor Type:  Federal;     State;         Industry     Not-for-Profit   

Unfunded;     Internally Funded

Grant Title (if different from project title):

Section II: Performance Site

- Bell Flower Clinic
- Beltway Surgery Centers
- Clarian North Medical Center
- Clarian West Medical Center
- General Clinical Research Center (GCRC)\*
- IU School of Dentistry
- IU Cancer Center\*
- IU Medical Group Primary Care Clinic (IUMG-PC), including Wishard primary care clinics
  - Spring Mill Medical Center
- IU Medical Group Specialty Clinic (IUMG-SC)
- IU/IUPUI Campus, Location: CA, CE, UC, ES
- Krannert Institute of Cardiology\*
- LaPorte Regional Health System
- Larue Carter Hospital
- Lilly Clinic
- Methodist Beltway Centers

- Methodist Hospital
- Methodist-Affiliated Centers/Private Practices
- Midtown Mental Health\*
- Regenstrief Institute
- Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana
- Riley Hospital
- University Hospital
- Veterans Affairs Medical Center\*\*
- Wishard Memorial Hospital\*
  - Hospital/ER
  - Non-primary care
    - Regenstrief Health Center
    - Wishard Specialty Clinics

\* Additional information or submission may be required prior to initiating the study.

Please check with the specific performance site for additional information.

\*\*Any study using the VA as a performance site, using VA patients, or funded by the VA MUST be submitted to and receive approval from the VA R and D Committee before any research can be conducted at the VA,.

### Section III: Research Description

NOTE: Study information will be released to the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) for the clinical trials listing. To opt out of this listing requirement you will need to get opt-out approval from Dr. Anantha Shekhar, PhD, MD, Director of Indiana CTSI, prior to IRB submission. For additional information or to request opt-out approval, please contact Sam Scahill at (317) 278-6969 or [sscahill@iupui.edu](mailto:sscahill@iupui.edu).

Provide a brief description, in lay terms, of the purpose of the proposed project and the procedures to be used.

The overarching inquiry question is: By studying power dynamics through a Bona Fide Group perspective, how do membership and influence help shape group communication?

The major data collection component of the study will involve interviews of students involved in the IUPUI World Relations Group (WRG) and field notes generated by observations of the IUPUI WRG meetings resulting in a case study research of the student organization conducted in common areas on the IUPUI campus.

Please state the eligibility (inclusion/exclusion criteria).

Students who have expressed interest or are involved with the IUPUI World Relations Group will be asked for their voluntary participation in interviews and observation of the WRG meetings.

Will subjects be compensated for participation?

No.

ONLY COMPLETE 2-4 BELOW IF YOU SELECTED CATEGORY 1, 2, 3, 5, OR 6 ON THE EXEMPT RESEARCH CHECKLIST.

Provide the process by which individuals will be recruited.

Individuals will be comprised of the members of the IUPUI World Relations Group.

Explain how it will be ensured that recruitment or selection will not unfairly target a particular population or will target the population that will benefit from the project/research.

Participation will be open to any and all WRG members. We will not ask the interviewees to identify themselves by name nor will we record the person's name in conjunction with the data produced. Additionally we will use pseudonyms to identify the subjects. Further we will only be asking about normal organizational practices. We will not be interviewing or observing minors.

Explain how it will be ensured that individuals will be treated with respect during interactions/observations with them. For those individuals with diminished autonomy (e.g. children, people with limited ability to make decisions), explain how they will be protected.

Only adults with full autonomy will be included in this project, but each individual will only be asked questions approved by the IRB board.

Explain how individual privacy will be protected. For example, if interviewing, where will that be conducted?

Individual interviews will be held in secure locations on the IUPUI campus and will last approximately 45 minutes.

Explain how individual confidentiality will be protected. For example, what kind of information will be recorded and how will that be protected?

The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed but the name of the individual will not appear in any written reports. The follow-up necessary, would be conducted over the phone. Names will be kept separate from the information that is given, and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

How will you help to minimize potential risks that individuals may be exposed to while participating in the research? Potential risks may include psychological, social, legal, physical, etc.

Every effort will be made to keep individuals from being uncomfortable. If an individual feels uncomfortable at any time, they can excuse themselves from the interview or

observation. Another potential risk of taking part in this study is loss of confidentiality. However, efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential.

---

Statement of Investigator (or Faculty Sponsor in the case of a student project). I have personally reviewed this application and agree with its contents and am aware of my responsibility to provide supervision and guidance during its execution (in the case of a student project).

Signature: Kim White-Mills/Charmayne Champion-Shaw (electronic consent)    Date:  
04/17/2009

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#### Section IV: Exempt Review Determination

Accepted, Exempt Category (ies):

Denied, Reason:

Authorized Signature: Date:

Exemption determination reported to:  IRB-01  IRB-02  IRB-03  
 IRB-04  IRB-05

## Appendix C

### Individual Interview Protocol

## Individual Interview Protocol

### Introduction to Group

Please tell me how you heard about the student organization/club?

What is the purpose of the organization/club?

Which aspects of the organization appealed to you? Why?

What prompted you personally to join?

How do you feel that you contribute to the group?

### Group Dynamics

Were you familiar with members of the student organization/club when you first attended?

How did you feel about your place within the organization/club after your first few meetings?

What did you understand to be the responsibilities of the membership?

What contributions do you feel you made to the group?

Do you feel that the expectations from the group are the same for every member?

Do you feel the organization/group is valued on this campus?

### Group Leadership

How do you define leadership?

Were you familiar with the leadership of the student organization/club when you first attended?

What are the responsibilities of the leadership?

As a student within the organization/group did you experience challenges? Please discuss.

Were/Are there ever times when you felt pressured to agree with leadership? Please discuss.

How did you deal with leadership in situations where you disagreed?

Were/Are you aware of situations where other members disagreed with leadership?

How/Were these resolved?

Ultimately, was this a worthwhile experience for you? Please discuss.

If you were to offer advice, what recommendations would you make?

## Appendix D

Group Membership Dynamics Study

Demographic Questionnaire

Interview Number

Date

Time

Name of Interviewer

### Group Membership Dynamics Study Demographic Questionnaire

For each question below, please place an 'X' inside each box that represents an accurate response, and/or write an appropriate response on each blank.

#### STUDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gender:  Female  Male

Age:  18-22  23-27  28-32  33-37  38-42  43-49  50+

Race:  White  Black  Bi-Racial (Specify, if you wish)

---

Ethnicity:

- American
- African
- Bangladeshi
- Caribbean
- Chinese
- Indian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latino/a or Hispanic background

- Middle Eastern
  - Native American - Tribal Affiliation
  - Pakistani
  - Philippine
  - Samoan
  - Vietnamese
  - Mixed Ethnic background
  - Any other background (Specify, if you wish)
- 

Country of Origin:

---

#### CAMPUS INFORMATION

8. Student status:  Undergraduate  Graduate  Professional

\*If undergraduate, what year are you?  Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior

9. Are you currently taking classes at IUPUI:  Full-time  Part-time

10. To what school do you belong?

- Herron School of Art and Design
- Business
- Education
- Engineering and Technology
- General Studies
- Informatics

- Liberal Arts
- Music
- Nursing
- Physical Education and Tourism Management
- Public and Environmental Affairs
- Science
- Social Work
- University College
- Law
- Medical
- Dental
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

13. In what (if any) student clubs or organizations are you involved?

14. For each student club or organization, please note the length of your membership.  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. In what (if any) leadership roles do you hold within each organization?

\_\_\_\_\_

16. How many students are involved in each organization?

\_\_\_\_\_

17. If you are involved in clubs, how did you find out about them?

- IUPUI website
  - Friend / word of mouth
  - Flyer
  - Listserv / Jag News
  - Campus and Community Life
  - Other (Please describe)
-

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Charmayne Champion-Shaw

### EDUCATION

*Indiana University*

M.A., Applied Communication .....2011  
Areas of Concentration: Applied Media Criticism/Management and Applied Corporate Communication

*Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN*

B.G.S., General Studies .....2007  
Areas of Concentration: Arts and Humanities; Minors: Communication and Anthropology

*Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN*

A.A.G.S., General Studies ..... 2005  
Areas of Concentration: Arts and Humanities

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

*IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN*

Adjunct Faculty ..... 2008 - 2011  
Instruct students in interpersonal communication, mass media and contemporary society and introduction to social justices; facilitate or guest lecture on gender communication, Native American culture and communication, Native American sovereignty and identity, and effective conflict resolution.

*IUPUI American Indian Programs, Indianapolis, IN*

Assistant Director ..... 2009-2011  
Responsible for the implementation, creation and direction of American Indian programs at IUPUI including Native American studies initiatives and Native American heritage month planning. Coordinate programs between IUPUI and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in order to develop further relationship between the school and the tribe.

*IUPUI Upward Bound, Indianapolis, IN*

Faculty/Instructor ..... 2009 - 2010  
Assisted in the development of skill building curriculum in an effective program which provides opportunities for disadvantaged high school youth in Indianapolis. Taught courses in basic collegiate skill building such as: note-taking, time management, reading at a collegiate level and professional development.

*IU School of Education at IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN*

Researcher, Center for Urban and Multicultural Education ..... 2007 - 2008  
Conducted two full-research studies focusing on the perception of campus climate as it pertains to diversity. The first assessed perception of IUPUI students; the second assessed the perceptions of Faculty of Color.

*Carefree WorldTravel Affiliates*

Office Manager/Program Director for Leisure ..... 2002 - 2004  
Led training program for vacation sales agents which included instruction on Worldspan formats, policies and procedures, customer service and sales skills. Created vacation agent training manuals, tests, and measuring tools for agents. Developed leisure program for this previously corporate agency and engaged the leisure clientele from their corporate accounts.

*Hoosier Travel Service*

Manager of Leisure Department and Marketing Services ..... 1998 - 2002  
Responsible for creating, developing, marketing, and implementing retail programs for the leisure travel division of this full service travel agency. Designed several different training programs to increase leisure agents' productivity and also enhance customer service skills.

*American Trans Air*

Training Representative ..... 1996 - 1998  
Part of a team which developed strategic training plans for airline counter representatives. Led training courses on customer service skills in customer relations, specifically conflict resolution.

Vacation Sales Agent ..... 1995 - 1996  
Assisted customers in planning leisure vacations which included confirming airline tickets, securing hotel accommodations, and reserving a wide variety of related vacation components.

*Indiana Licensed Beverage Association*

Executive Director/Lobbyist ..... 1993 - 1995  
Managed the state office of this non-profit organization serving over 2500 licensed beverage establishments in Indiana. Converted all office and membership roster from written files to computer databases. Lobbied at the Indiana Statehouse on behalf of the rights of bar and tavern owners. Structured and implemented the annual state conventions.

**CERTIFICATIONS**

IUPUI Mediation Training – Certificate ..... 2010  
Preparing Future Faculty – Certificate ..... 2009  
Certified Travel Counselor – Certificate ..... 2005

**PRESENTATIONS**

Presentation: “Finding Indians in Indiana: The American Indian History of Indiana.” 22<sup>nd</sup> Joseph C. Taylor Symposium: Imagining + Imagining the City: Perspectives on Indianapolis, IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.  
February 28, 2011.

Presentation. “Precedents of Presidents: Presidential Perspectives on American Indian Policy.” Indiana State Museum., Indianapolis, IN.  
November 18, 2010.

Presentation: “Rediscovering Tribes Native to Indiana: Potawatomi, Miami, Shawnee, Lenape, Kickapoo, Cheyenne, and Cheyenne.” Cherokee Museum, Cherokee, NC.  
September 18, 2010

Presentation. “Native American Genealogy: Finding Your Family.” Indiana Native American Heritage Festival. Indianapolis, IN.  
August 27, 2010.

Presentation. “Conformation and Transformation: Recovering Native American Language.” 21st Joseph C. Taylor Symposium: Voices in the City: Language, Literacy and Urban Life. IUPUI, Indianapolis, IN.  
February 25, 2010.

Presentation. "Dis-Carded: Modern American Indian Identity." Native American Heritage Day 2009. Garfield Park, Indianapolis, IN. August 19, 2009.

Panel Discussion. "Cultural Identity and Communication: Native American Representation in Media." Myaamiaki Conference 2009. University of Miami, Oxford, OH. March 19, 2009.

Presentation. "Recreating a Native American Self." Southwest/Texas Popular & American Popular Culture Associations 29th Annual Conference. Albuquerque, NM. February 13-16, 2008

## PUBLICATIONS

Article. (November, 2010). "Historic Signing at IUPUI: Sovereign Nation to State University." *Indian Country Today*. 4(32)12-14.

Article (April 2010). "Aiming Arrows. American Indian Students as Tokens." *Native American The American Indian Graduate Magazine*. Albuquerque, NM. 23.

Article. (November, 2008). "American Indian Education." *News from Indian Country*. Hayward, WI. 14 (6)11-17.

Book. (Anthology.) "Indiana-Native American Scholars in Higher Education." *The Wisdom of Generosity, Texas: Baylor University Press*, Anticipated publication in 2012.

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

*IUPUI Native American Faculty and Staff Council*  
Co-Chairman..... 2008 - 2011  
Responsible for developing budget, creating opportunities for professional development, organizing meetings and maintaining communication for and between American Indian members of IUPUI faculty and staff.

*IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI Associate Faculty Council*  
Department of Communication Studies Liaison..... 2009 - 2011  
Advocating to create better work environment for IUPUI's adjunct faculty, specifically by sharing information with both full-time and part-time faculty as well as students within the Communication studies department at IUPUI.

*Indiana Diversity Women's Network*  
Education Coordinator ..... 2008 - 2011  
Advocacy group established to create network of women of color throughout the State of Indiana. The IDWM works in conjunction with the City of Indianapolis and the State of Indiana.

*IUPUI Women's Advisory Council*  
Member ..... 2007 - 2010  
Member of committee dedicated to creating campus awareness for women and women's issues on the IUPUI campus.

*Indiana Native American Affairs Indian Commission*  
Outreach Committee for Education  
Advisor..... 2007 - 2009  
Responsible for creating working relationships between the Indiana State Commission and Indiana schools and colleges as well as working to create more Native American student groups throughout the State. Developed Native American financial aid guide.

## HONORS AND AWARDS

Key Contributor Award, Indiana Native American Business Association .....	2010
Sarah Winnemucca Achievement Award, IUPUI .....	2009
Outstanding Female Student Leader of the Year, IUPUI Office of Women.....	2007
Diversity Action Committee Literary Award, Purdue University .....	2007
Plater Medallion Civic Engagement Award, IUPUI.....	2007
Anna G. Melodia “Building Community” Award, IUPUI USG .....	2007

## MEMBERSHIPS

National Communication Association  
Social Justice Training Institute  
National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (National Advisory Council)  
Native American Indian Studies Association  
National Indian Education Association  
Lambda Alpha (National Collegiate Anthropology Honors Fraternity)  
American Indian Graduate Center  
Society for Human Resource Management  
American Society of Travel Agents  
Girl Scouts of America (Life Member)  
Boy Scouts of America, USA  
National Aphasia Association