

The Appropriation of Diversity Discourses at Work: A Ventriloquial Approach

Pascale Caidor
Université de Montréal

François Cooren
Université de Montréal

In this paper we propose to analyze the implementation of a new diversity program by adopting a communication as constitutive of organization (CCO) approach. More precisely, we propose to mobilize a ventriloquial perspective on organizational communication (Cooren and Sandler, 2014), as we believe that it allows to identify what leads members to appropriate or, on the contrary, reject diversity initiatives. This empirical study aims to understand how members mobilize different figures, whether humans, norms, values and principles, to justify or fight against the norms being put into effect in this new project.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, private and public organizations have turned to specific programs and initiatives to facilitate the inclusion of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds in the workplace. Cultural diversity and inclusion are areas that have seen, over the years, a proliferation of initiatives intended to promote differences, particularly in the workplace (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). To this end, organizations have implemented a variety of diversity initiatives, such as training (Kalev *et al.*, 2006; Lindsay, 2013), mentoring programs (Passmore *et al.*, 2013), and focus groups (Kulik *et al.*, 2008) to create a more diverse environment (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). We can say that, because of socio-demographic changes, there has been a significant turn to ‘diversity’ for many organizations (Ahmed, 2006). These organizations have typically focused their diversity efforts on “best practices” to reduce societal biases and facilitate the inclusion of minority groups in the labor market (Nishii *et al.*, 2018).

Despite the importance of diversity programs, they can, however, be difficult to implement and lead to unintended negative effects (Von Bergen, 2002). In fact, during the implementation of a diversity initiative, some organizational practices can even result in more discrimination in the workplace (Lindsay, 2013). The organization can also experience open and more subtle forms of resistance, which undermine members’ commitment to new diversity initiatives (Thomas, 2012; Wasserman, Gallegos & Ferdman, 2012).

Several authors (Ely, 2004; Kalev *et al.*, 2006) provided guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of diversity programs. Most of these researchers tend, however, to minimize the role of communication in the emergence of this new organizational reality. As we will show, the success or

failure of these initiatives especially depends on the way it is eventually appropriated or disappropriated by employees and managers, which means that communication constitutes a key aspect of such initiatives. In this paper, we propose to explore how such initiatives are negotiated on the terra firma of interaction (Cooren, 2006), that is, we posit that the outcomes of a new diversity initiatives ultimately depend on the way the program is appropriated or disappropriated through various forms of negotiation. It is this process of appropriation/disappropriation that we propose to study through the detailed analysis of a meeting episode.

We start from the premise that diversity initiatives should above all be conceived as constructed and reproduced through various communicative activities (Ahmed, 2006), that is, that they should be first and foremost considered as *communicatively constituted* (Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud and Taylor, 2014; Cooren, 2010, 2015; Taylor and Van Every, 2000, 2011, 2014). In order to study this phenomenon, we thus propose to analyze the implementation of a new diversity program by adopting a *communication as constitutive of organization* (CCO) approach. More precisely, we propose to mobilize a ventriloquial perspective on organizational communication (Cooren, 2010, 2012; Cooren and Sandler, 2014), as we believe that it allows to identify what leads members to appropriate or, on the contrary, reject diversity initiatives.

Through this ventriloquial analysis, we will indeed empirically show how members come to navigate between appropriation and disappropriation, especially through the values, norms and principles to which they declare their attachment. Attachment, as we will see, indeed expresses, by definition, a form of appropriation, that is, what is supposed to be *proper* to who people are and what they stand for. Any new initiative thus has to pass the *appropriation test*, so to speak, that is, demonstrates that it aligns or at least does not interfere with what members have already appropriated, that is, the values, norms and principles to which they feel a form of attachment.

From a ventriloquial perspective, any discussion about a diversity initiative thus implies the expression of *tensions* (Cooren, Matte, Benoit-Barné & Brummans, 2013; Hong, Falter & Fecho, 2017; Putnam, Fairhurst & Banghart, 2016) between various forms of attachment that organizational members experience when confronted with the necessity of positioning themselves vis-à-vis this initiative. Passing the appropriation test thus consists, for a diversity initiative, in demonstrating that it can *matter* or *count*, that is, that it can find its place in an ecology of programs, principles, values, norms, etc, to which people are attached in an organization.

In this article, we propose to analyze a specific excerpt taken from an important meeting of a project team in charge of implementing a diversity initiative in a large Canadian organization. To do so, we first present two dominant perspectives on ethnocultural diversity initiatives that can be found in the literature: colorblindness vs. multiculturalism. After having shown some of the limitations of this literature, we then present the ventriloquial approach. According to us, this perspective allows us to identify how members come to concretely appropriate or disappropriate such initiatives while navigating between the tensions that define the ecology of their actions. After having presented our methodology, we analyze the details of the episode selected and we then discuss the results of this analysis. Finally, we suggest some practical implications for managers leading diversity programs.

DOMINANT APPROACHES TO RESEARCH ON ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

The literature on ethnocultural diversity initiatives tends to distinguish two main approaches: colorblindness and multiculturalism. Other promising approaches also exist, such as, for example, colorminimisation (Foldy & Buckley, 2014) or all-inclusive multiculturalism (AIM) (Stevens *et al.* 2008), which are developed to address significant deficiencies in the standard multicultural and colorblindness ideologies. However, despite these new approaches, colorblindness and multiculturalism can be considered the dominant perspectives not only in the literature, but also in the practices themselves. In developing this literature review, we asked the following questions: How does the literature on diversity initiatives understand the importance of social interactions for the implementation of diversity initiatives? How can

these studies contribute to a better understanding of ethnocultural diversity initiatives from a communicational viewpoint?

Colorblindness

This type of initiative is generally based on ideals of meritocracy and equality (Jansen et al., 2016). Thomas & Ely (1996) prefer to speak of a “discrimination and fairness paradigm” to describe this approach. This perspective emphasizes the importance of promoting equitable treatment among employees. However, it also puts pressure on employees to minimize cultural differences. The institutionalization of the colorblindness perspective leads organizations to convince employees to view everyone as being the same (Avery & Johnson, 2012). Generally, it embraces a view of diversity that tends to reduce people to resources that the organization possesses and should benefit from. The need to manage diversity is promoted not for social reasons but for competitive advantage.

Indeed, diversity programs are considered, most of the time, as mechanisms put in place to increase organizational performance and sometimes even creativity within a group. In these cases, discursive strategies are mainly used to support the “business case” argument, which is considered as a more functional and rational argument compared to moral and social structural arguments for change (Davidson & Proudford, 2012). As Mease (2012) point out, “the business case argument continues to be very dominant among organizational diversity initiatives” (p. 3). She demonstrates how diversity consultants tend to use this strategy to gain easy access to organizations because the latter are generally more receptive to a justification based on business needs.

Also, Chrobot-Mason et al. (2012) explain how during a two-day diversity training (in one business unit of a multinational U.S. corporation), participants were usually receptive during the initial exploration of the business case. Very little resistance arises until the session shifts to a discussion on race and other sensitive diversity topics. Furthermore, an instrumental view of diversity initiatives also perpetuates the metaphor of “managing diversity” (Kirby & Harter, 2001), which reveals a managerial ideology that can obscure “the way language has implications for structuring and creating new reality” (p. 22). In this sense, managerial diversity discourse frame organizational members as “objects” or “bottom line cost” to serve organizational profitability rather than the human beings who are actively engaged in such initiatives.

Moreover, Apfelbaum et al. (2008) have empirically demonstrated that “colorblindness strategies” are also used by social actors for other purposes. For example, to regulate the appearance of prejudices during social interactions. Participants in diversity initiatives tend to use different strategies in their social interactions to voluntarily ignore socio-cultural differences. One strategy commonly mobilized is simply to avoid talking about cultural differences. In other words, when the interaction is framed as interracial, colorblindness strategies are perceived by social actors as an effective means of appearing unprejudiced. Therefore, the colorblindness approach can be seen as a norm that regulates an interaction or a resource that members of the organization mobilize to navigate new multicultural environments.

In the context of a diversity program, for example, some trainings designed to facilitate professional interactions between diverse groups invite participants to minimize their differences by focusing instead on finding “a super-ordinate goal or identity, such as a common affiliation with the broader organization” (Stevens et al., 2008, p. 119). This type of diversity training is intended to create a more inclusive workplace where employees can end up feeling stronger about the organization or the work itself rather than their affiliated groups (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2012).

Beyond the strategies used by actors, the implementation of this type of initiative tends to produce different effects, as some authors have shown (Avery et al., 2012). For example, ignoring differences in ethnic groups may be perceived by minority groups as a form of denial of their cultural heritage, which can be detrimental to their well-being (Sleeter, 1991). Conversely, for other authors, this type of approach can reinforce the idea of equality and merit (Markus et al., 2000; Plaut, 2002; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Indeed, ignoring differences can implicitly promote the idea that all members of the organization are the same and should be treated fairly.

However, one of the disadvantages of this practice is that employees belonging to minority groups may not be encouraged to act or think according to the unique view given to them by their identities and

social affiliations. As a result, organizations perceived as ignorant or that do not value differences can sometimes face the frustration or dissatisfaction of members of non-minority groups (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2002). Moreover, in some cases, this can lead to conflicts within the organization (Friedman et al., 2001).

Therefore, many scholars strongly criticize the use of these strategies to the extent that they may not truly improve organizational climate or foster inclusion (Kirby & Harter, 2001; Prasad, Pringle, & Konrad, 2006). As a result, many organizations opt for initiatives that rely on different approaches promoting multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism

The multiculturalism approach, by contrast, proposes that differences should not only be recognized and considered, but also celebrated (Takaki, 1993). It seems that with this approach we are moving away from strategies to “manage diversity” toward strategies to “value diversity” with the intention of correcting social ills. It echoes the perspectives developed by some critical researchers (Janssens and Zanoni, 2005; Parker, 2005; Tomlinson et al. 2009) who argue that organizational diversity efforts should be guided by an ideal of social justice. Critical perspectives generally approach diversity programs as mechanisms that contribute to fighting against discrimination and prejudices in organizational settings (Allen, 1995/2011; Prasad et al. 1997) rather than as simple tools to increase company performance. Research has shown that while explicit forms of prejudice have decreased, implicit and subtle forms persist (Thomas & Plaut, 2012). Therefore, the primary goal of diversity initiatives should be to address these novel forms of discrimination and resistance to diversity.

According to several authors, organizations need to pay more attention to cultural norms within organizations (Crandall *et al.*, 2012, Thomas & Plaut, 2002). As Thomas and Plaut (2002) point out, “the more normatively acceptable it is to harbor prejudice against a certain group, the more willing people are to express it” (p. 11) in their everyday talk. From this perspective, differences should be seen not only as a strength for the organization, but also as the foundation of some organizational identity that is not necessarily homogeneous (Pratt and Foreman, 2000). Moreover, for several years now, we have been witnessing the development of theoretical models that do not necessarily fit with a critical perspective, but nevertheless emphasize the positive contributions of identifying differences, among other things, to help reduce conflicts in the workplace.

Friday and Friday (2003) suggest a planned three-phase change approach to implementing diversity initiatives. The first phase consists of acknowledging diversity. It is about ensuring that members of the organization can recognize how individual differences can impact relationships within the organization. The organization must then take certain steps, such as exposing the organization's members to greater diversity and imparting knowledge on this issue. The second phase (valuing diversity) represents a series of steps that will lead the organization to show, through its actions, its respect for and appreciation of individual differences. Finally, the third phase consists in managing diversity through strategies focused on the organization and planning of work, taking into account individual differences.

What emerges from this theoretical model is that diversity training should, for example, focus on identifying differences and valuing them. This can help counter diversity resistance and hostility to diversity training, which tend to have a strong emotional component (Chrobot-Mason *et al.*, 2012). Participants in such initiatives can use, among other things, questioning strategies to better understand perceived differences. For instance, members of the organization may question members of minority groups about their cultural practices. As a result, the discourse of members participating in these types of initiatives can be guided by the idea that naming differences help create an inclusive work environment.

However, while multiculturalism should ideally foster a sustainable organizational climate of inclusion, multicultural diversity initiatives, especially diversity training, tend to disappear, fall short of achieving their objectives, or fail completely because they encounter resistance from dominant groups (Chrobot-Mason & al., 2012; Mannix et al., 2006). These initiatives can therefore elicit skepticism and resentment among some groups. This suggests that companies adopting this type of approach may place

too much emphasis on cultural differences without taking the time to analyze these differences or to understand their impact on day-to-day operations in the organization (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

Although the approaches discussed above provide important insights about organizational norms, values and principles related to diversity initiatives, few studies have shown how participants in diversity program navigate strategically through these different positions (for an exception, see Mease 2012, 2016, which we discuss below). New diversity initiatives are mostly studied in isolation (one perspective and initiative at the time) rather than in interaction with current practices. Thus, inadequate attention is given to how new norms and principles might interact with those already in place to affect outcomes and discrimination issues (Nishii *et al.*, 2018). Also, problems occur when tensions are perceived as going too far in either direction influencing the way people will accept or resist diversity initiatives.

As part of the implementation of diversity initiatives, these different perspectives imply a series of actions and practices that the organization is supposed to put in place. What guides the implementation of these practices is the adoption of organizational norms related to the two perspectives discussed above. From a communication point of view, one can therefore question how these norms are *appropriated* or *disappropriated* in interaction. Norms are in some ways generated, reconstructed, but mostly negotiated in the interactions surrounding the implementation of diversity initiatives. It is this negotiation/appropriation/disappropriation that we propose to study, for it seems to us that the future of these initiatives depends heavily on it.

Indeed, the course of action or the trajectory of the implementation of diversity initiatives should inevitably depend on their *appropriation*, which depends on the way actors collectively make sense of them. The implementation of such initiatives should ideally lead participants to practical modes of appropriation of the program. More than thirty years ago, Cheney and Tomkins (1987) explained that the notion of appropriation could be used to describe members acceptance or resistance to organizational discourses. For these authors, the concept of appropriation refers to “something acquired and invested” (p. 5). In the same line of thoughts, Chreim (2006) introduces the notions of *partial appropriation* to show that it is possible to analyze in employees’ accounts related to an organizational change process, how they were resisted and edited new institutional discourses during the process. She also interpreted this resistance as a misalignment between interpretative frames held by individuals and those proposed by management.

Also, as Abdellah (2007) points out, to appropriate an initiative “is therefore to make it your own, to adapt it to oneself” (p. 8). The notion of appropriation then is central to diversity initiatives, since it is through such appropriation that members of the organization adopt the norms, rules and principles that underlie these initiatives. As such, it is by appropriating diversity programs and initiatives that participants are thus able to “incorporate” them into their practices and discourses (Abdellah, 2007).

Abdellah (2007) distinguishes four types of appropriation: instrumental, symbolic, common and differentiated. In her research on strategic planning, she views instrumental appropriation as a way to use a strategic plan to justify some important decision and symbolic appropriation as a way to use the same plan to promote and share organization values. In other words, on the one hand, organizational members refer to the strategic plan as a symbol reaffirming the social mission of the organization and on the other hand, some member are referring to the same plan as a justification tool to explain important decisions. Appropriation can also be common (everyone shares a common view of the project) or differentiated (different points of view). Finally, when members appropriate a new diversity initiative, they appear to internalize the norms and principles that are supposed to guide the constitution (or materialization) of the new initiative and members’ eventual participation in it.

Echoing Garfinkel (1967), Mease (2012) calls attention to the way norms and principles should be seen as discursive tools rather than as a discursive structure that leads to inevitable outcomes. This line of thought leads to the conclusion that any organizational norms must be seen as an interpretative resource that is constitutive of action. Norms can be seen as “malleable realities that actors reflectively *reappropriate*, alter and adapt during their implementation in a context when individuals are taking one or more social actions” (Robichaud & Benoit-Barné, 2010, p. 41). Therefore, organizational members have

the capacity to choose between different discursive tools and practices to influence diversity initiatives outcomes.

Discursive Practices, Polyphony and Ventriloquism

From a communicative perspective, the implementation of a diversity initiative can also be seen as a way of changing the existing discourse about ethnocultural diversity. In this view, discourse and social interactions allow social actors to construct a new reality for the organization rather than simply reflecting reality (Putnam *et al.* 2016). With regard to the communication perspectives dealing with diversity initiatives, Thomas (2004) point out that they unfortunately tend to focus primarily on how communication is used as a management tool to support the purpose of these programs and initiatives. This emphasizes the circulation of key messages to promote organizational diversity.

While many do recognize the fundamental importance of communication in implementing such initiatives, communication is often seen as a simple exchange of information between program initiators and organizational members. As a result, efforts to implement new projects to promote diversity focus on ways of facilitating a better flow of information among participants. A consequence of this, it seems to us, is that the various appropriations that arise during the implementation phase are not considered. However, recent studies in organizational communication (Trittin *et al.*, 2017) call for greater attention to be paid to the central role communication can play in implementing diversity initiatives. Moreover, studying discursive practices can be particularly relevant, for this can demonstrate that diversity initiatives are built, above all, through the discourse of the organization's members as they make sense of these diversity initiatives (Weick, 1995). As a result of members' sensemaking activities, continual tensions can unify, reunify or disunite through emerging diversity discourses.

In the process of putting in place a new diversity initiative, organizational actors might experience tensions, defined as « push-pull dilemmas that grow out of discontinuities as a result of competing directions and struggles between opposites.» (Putnam *et al.*, 2016 p. 34). As Putnam *et al.* (2016) point out, a constitutive view of organizational tensions helps us see the way discourse sets the conditions for how actors recognize tensions in organizational processes. As new norms, values and principles emerge in the form of new discourses, organizational members choose to appropriate or not these new discourses seeking perhaps for a “relative equilibrium between the tensions” (Hong *et al.*, 2017, p. 22).

From a communicative constitutive perspective, the process of implementing a diversity program appears more like a series of negotiations, translations, and mediations in which each member can actively participate in the implementation or rejection of the initiative. From this point of view, the emphasis should be placed on the localized and recurrent practices of those involved in such programs. In addition, these negotiations often result in the *appropriation* or *disappropriation* of organizational rules and practices that underpin these initiatives on the *terra firma* of interactions (Cooren, 2006).

In this regard, Cooren (2010) conceives communication as a ventriloquial activity in which various figures are staged and express themselves in interaction (the word “figure” is, indeed, the term sometimes used by ventriloquists to talk about their puppets). This approach thus supports the idea that “we would always be communicating in the name of certain principles, norms, values and modes of action that animate us, constrain us and make us act at the same time” (Matte, 2012, p. 135). In this view, analyzing an interactive scene is like revealing the figures that the participants animate and that animate them.

These figures may include—but are not limited to—values, beliefs, ideas, norms or principles, whether these are evoked, invoked or called upon by members of the organization. Cooren (2012) thus describes the communication mechanisms that make it possible to better understand how figures come to do things in a given situation. As he points out, if participants ventriloquize rules and norms, it is also because these same humans can be, in many ways, considered as themselves ventriloquized by these figures that they invoke. So, if we mobilize the voice of another person in a turn of talk, or if we become the spokesperson for a norm or a principle, it is also because that person or standard is also implicitly presented as leading us to say something, that is, expressing itself through us.

Ventriloquism appears well suited to explore the interaction between current organizational practices and new practices because this approach explores “the tensional interplays among figures from everyday

talks in the local site of meaning construction” (Long, 2016, p. 6). We thus hypothesize that the polyphonic approach proposed by Cooren (2010, 2015), which echoes Bakhtin’s (1981) work, can help us understand how actors mobilize multiple voices (human and non-human) to negotiate the appropriation or rejection of a more inclusive environment (see also Anderson, 2005). In fact, Bakhtin (1981) was one of the first to identify the polyphonic dimension that he believed was present in any given discourse. This is part of a dialogical framework, which means that turns of talk are never monological, but rather embody multiple voices interacting in multiple ways.

This means that it is possible to identify, in a speech or conversation, the multiple voices that may animate it. This ventriloquial, dialogical and polyphonic vision of discourse allows us to overcome the idea that there is a single author when someone says something. In other words, the voices of several authors can be embodied in a single turn of talk. Therefore, as part of implementing a diversity initiative, the discourse of organizational members can be analyzed to identify converging voices and dissenting voices that are heard within the organization and participate or not in the appropriation/disappropriation of the initiative.

The research question guiding this study is therefore the following: (RQ) *How do organizational members negotiate the appropriation or disappropriation of norms and principles on which a new discourse on diversity is based?*

METHODOLOGY

Description of the Case

This case study is part of a broader study that we are undertaking in a Canadian parapublic organization. EBF (the company name is a pseudonym) is a large organization with more than 20,000 employees working across Canada. In our study, we focus on a new professional mentoring program for recent immigrants developed within EBF and its divisions. This program was also developed in response to a specific Canadian policy on immigration, participation and inclusion. The objective of the EBF project team is to help prepare workers for the coming change, so as to reduce their stress and elaborate different strategies to integrate these migrant workers into the organization. This pilot project lasted from May 2017 to May 2018. We were able to follow the progress of this project from its beginnings to its completion.

Over the past year, the company's Executive Committee and CEO decided that diversity had now become a business challenge for the organization. According to him, the portrait of the company is not what it should be in terms of diversity, so a manager was mandated last fall to make some recommendations on this issue. In February 2017, 15 new diversity and inclusivity initiatives were endorsed by the Executive Committee. Among these initiatives was the development of a professional mentoring program for recent immigrants. The initiative aims to promote the integration of immigrants into Canadian society. It is also intended to create greater long-term diversity within the organization. The organization promises to hire employees from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds on a temporary basis. The employees are then matched with more experienced employees who are expected to provide support, both in terms of tasks and their integration into the work teams.

Prior to the implementation of this initiative, a project team was put in place to help create a more diverse and inclusive work environment. Among other things, this working group was to define the various parameters of the project. In the weeks following its establishment, the project team decided to hold working meetings. The excerpt reviewed below is taken from a meeting of this working group as its members try to define a welcoming structure for these new employees from diverse backgrounds.

Data Collection

As part of a broader research project involving all actors involved in the project, this article focuses on the team responsible for implementing this initiative. As a participant observer, the first author of this article followed the course of the project. The five members of the project team met approximately once every two weeks for the first six months. The duration of the meetings varied from 45 minutes to one

hour. The researcher received permission to audio-record all these reunions. In addition, she was able to conduct and record semi-structured interviews with members of the project team for approximately 30 to 40 minutes. She also collected field notes during visits and participated in two training sessions that were part of the program. The data collected thus far includes 50 pages of field notes, over nine hours of team meeting conversations and six hours of interview data. Interviews and meetings were transcribed according to the conventions of conversation analysis (Jefferson, 1984).

Data Analysis

For this article, we selected an excerpt taken from an important meeting that provided an opportunity for participants to confront their viewpoints regarding this diversity project. We chose to present this episode because it presents a particularly difficult dialogue where the members had to justify their actions and positions regarding very sensitive diversity topics. During this meeting, participants were trying to define the different parameters of the project before the immigrant workers' arrival. In the analysis of this meeting transcript, we first identified the key figures that seemed to dictate how people spoke or behaved.

To do this, we conducted data sessions with other researchers. All researchers who participated in these sessions read the transcripts closely and took notes about emerging and recurring figures in the dialogues. We found various figures invoked by participants themselves—e.g., typical intern, typical migrant workers, equity, efficiency—that were salient in shaping how members make sense and negotiate this new initiative. These figures also seemed very important to them (for example, we will see that the figure of the “trainee” and his or her “well-being” often resurfaced in the discourse of the project team members), and thus expressed norms, values and principles to which they seemed to have a certain attachment. We thus mobilized a ventriloquial approach to unpack how norms and principles that underpin the program were constituted and negotiated in their dialogue. We especially found that organizational members discursively negotiated the common principles, values and norms that should guide their actions and decisions during the implementation of this initiative.

During our analysis, we also identified what might be called ‘markers’ through which the figures expressed themselves on a recurring basis. These markers could be explicit (for example, when project team members positioned themselves as speaking on behalf of the initiative) or relatively implicit (for example, when standards appeared to guide decision-making about the program). Through these analyses, the objective was to identify how these ventriloquial effects reflect the appropriation or rejection of the proposed initiative. Once the figures were identified, we then selected what we believe was the most interesting excerpt for the purpose of this article.

ANALYSIS

The excerpt reviewed below is taken from one of the project team meetings as its members plan the new hiring and selection process. In this excerpt, project team members review and discuss the project parameters. During this phase of planning, some questions arise, such as the following: What are the elements to consider when welcoming these new workers? What will be the criteria for selecting candidates? The discussion is launched by Jack who, in addition to being a member of the committee, is also a manager of the unit in which the project is supposed to be implemented.

In this organization, managers such as Jack are very involved in day-to-day operations and have many projects and resources to manage at the same time. They are also responsible for informing senior managers (who are not involved in this coordination meetings) about any important issue regarding the project. His main interlocutor is Janet, a human resources advisor who heads the committee and, as such, coordinates the process. Human resources advisors must collaborate on a regular basis with managers of different units, mainly to support them and give useful advice about the development of human resources. In this meeting, we also hear Mary a human resource assistant who assist Janet in various tasks related to the project.

In the following excerpt, the following topics are addressed: 1) the selection process for the new immigrant workers, 2) the possible workload adjustment required to integrate new resources and 3) the

definition of a welcoming structure. This discussion, which originally took place in French, was translated into English.

Extract 1 (record 2, lines 153-212)

153 Jack A young student who arrives, who did his internship, who has never worked in a
154 company, then you give him responsibilities, he just arrived, he does not know
155 anything, this is also challenging. They [the employees] are used to it, there are
156 roughly twenty of them [interns] per year.

157
158 Janet But things have to be named differently, according to the two profiles.

159
160 Jack Yes, but what I just mean is that my feeling, is it more demanding? I don't think
161 that our interns, not our RCR- Sorry ((speaking to Mary)) RCR are external
162 consultants. But honestly, when you hire an intern for 20 weeks, you know, I have
163 Sophia who is going to be with us, I have to welcome her, I have to sponsor her,
164 she has a shock because she has never really worked in a company. We have to
165 get her used to working in a company, having an office. I have to take care of her
166 logistics.

167
168 Janet I'm not saying that in terms of energy calculation it is more, but they are from
169 elsewhere=

170
171 Jack =Different colors

172
173 Janet Someone who has left his country, who has left his family, who hasn't worked in
174 his domain for three years or five years, who has experienced war.

175
176 Mary He has different needs.

177
178 Janet It's not true that this is simple, it's really not simple. You can expect that he will
179 deliver because the diploma is there, the experience is there. But maybe it won't
180 be that easy.

181
182 Jack Uh I-

183
184 Janet I don't know how we are going to proceed, but probably in the preparation.

185
186 Mary Maybe the sponsors' preparation

187
188 Jack You know, I'm gonna tell you, according to the procedures, there is going to be a
189 selection process, I imagine.

190
191 Janet Yes well yes.

192
193 Jack In the selection process also, there is no denying that when they are going to try to
194 choose someone, they are going to choose someone whose integration level in the
195 thing [the program] is going to be easier too.

196
197 Janet On the other hand, to play- here I am going to be a little the guardian of why this
198 program is proposed, it's also that we adhere to the principle that there are people
199 who did not have their chance, but you know, the ones who deserve it and who

200 have all the skills. Is it because integration is going to be harder that we are going
 201 to put him aside because, meanwhile, we have to keep the business running and
 202 everything? I don't know where to find the balance in there, but-
 203
 204 Jack I am not helping him if I get him in the organization, and then he has too big a
 205 curve to reach, I won't help him either. EBF is not necessarily a company to help
 206 him do so. I understand what you mean, Janet, but he does not do either- The
 207 program objective is to offer professional sponsors to people who have experience
 208 and training from outside Quebec and for whom it is the first job in Quebec. Our
 209 work is to welcome these people, and then there is a win-win at the end of the
 210 exercise. And then a win for the person who arrives. And if the person arrives,
 211 and then there is a steep curve to get in EBF, you're going to find this difficult.
 212 You know

How can we unpack the norms, principles and values that underlie conversations about diversity? And to what extent does the negotiation process taking place allow organizational members to appropriate or disappropriate this new program? In this excerpt, we see how Jack begins his intervention by invoking a figure—which he calls the “typical intern”—that is welcomed each year in the organization. Through the invocation of this figure, he tries to describe or illustrate the usual practices associated with welcoming temporary employees. The typical intern, who is presented as a young student, is ventriloquized by Jack to the extent that this figure is supposed to show how his service is prepared to a certain reality, which is *already present* within the organization. In other words, Jack is saying that when the organization is welcoming a new temporary employee or a trainee, “then you give him responsibilities, he just arrived, he does not know anything, this is also challenging.” (lines 154-155).

In our data, this figure commonly represents current organizational practices, or what belongs to the domain of the “known.” In other words, to invoke the situation of the typical intern is to make it say that the organization knows how to manage certain cases of training and already have a welcoming structure. As Wasserman *et al.* (2012) explain, subtle resistance to diversity can be an expression of an attachment to security and the *status quo*. It seems that, for Jack, the arrival of new immigrant workers should not require a major change in usual organizational practices. From his point of view, it is not necessary to provide a new welcoming structure or special measures. Rather, he insists that everything should proceed as usual, even if this new responsibility could be demanding. For Jack, it seems that the project scope must be in line with the norms and processes already in place—two realities that he invokes implicitly here.

It is at this moment that Janet intervenes, because, as she points out, “things have to be named differently, according to the two profiles.” (line 158). So, there would be, on the one hand, the profile of the typical intern, usually a young, inexperienced university student and, on the other hand, immigrant workers with no Canadian experience in their field, but some experience in their countries of origin. From a ventriloquial point of view, Janet is therefore positioning herself as speaking in the name of a reality that matters to her and should therefore be acknowledged. Janet thus dissociates herself from Jack by showing that the figure of the trainee (which recalls the usual norms) does not correspond to the reality that consists of welcoming new immigrant workers, a situation to which she implicitly marks a form of attachment. This reality ventriloquized in Janet's discourse dictates, according to her, that a new welcoming structure be put in place, a procedure that will take into account these new workers' needs. This new reality invites them, according to Janet, to think of more inclusive practices.

This example illustrates a first tension between the attachment to a certain *status quo* or security (ventriloquized by Jack) and the attachment to diversity as a positive change (ventriloquized by Janet). At this stage, some types of commitment seem to be linked to a certain form of disappropriation (commitment to security rather than commitment to the value of the program) and others to a form of appropriation (commitment to embrace diversity as a positive change). Also, tensions and resistance seem to be more apparent in this scene because one of the team members seeks to “dismantle existing norms

that may be disadvantageous to minorities and those that challenge ways of working together” (Thomas and Plaut, 2012, p. 17).

Following this intervention, we see Jack reacting by invoking what he presents as his “feeling” (line 160), which leads him to question the level of involvement required for the type of internship that Janet proposes (lines 160-161). As a result, Jack returns, again, to the figure of the “typical intern” to describe the reality of this type of situation. To do this, he presents the case of a new trainee, Sophia, whom he recently welcomed within his unit (lines 162-166). As he explains, this trainee experienced some difficulties: “she has a shock because she has never really worked in a company” (line 164). This means that he had to deal with this reality, which was already quite demanding.

From this excerpt, we see that Jack is describing what he presents as the situation of the “typical intern,” a situation that is, in some ways, supposed to speak for itself. What is this situation telling us? That welcoming temporary employees already requires a lot of work on the part of the person in charge (“I have to welcome her, I have to sponsor her”) (lines 163-164); “We have to get her used to working in a company, having an office. I have to take care of her logistics” (lines 164-166). In other words, ventriloquizing this kind of situation amounts to making it say that welcoming immigrant workers, which Jack sees as requiring even more work, could be too heavy for his service.

Janet appears to understand what Jack is suggesting and then tries to reassure him by replying, “I’m not saying that in terms of energy calculation it’s more, but they are from elsewhere” (lines 168-169). In other words, the reality of the conventional trainee, which Jack has just brought up, would ultimately not be that different from that of the one of foreign workers, to the extent that the two would compare in terms of energy spent. However, by stating that “but they are from elsewhere” (lines 168-169), she still emphasizes a reality that is supposed to warn Jack about the nature of what separates the conventional trainee from the immigrant workers.

We then see Jack specifying that immigrant workers are not only from elsewhere, but they also have “different colors” (line 171), thus referring to the workers’ ethnocultural origins. In doing so, he seems to put forward the way in which he ventriloquizes his interlocutor’s words. It is not so much that these trainees would require more energy from his services. In fact, the only difference, according to his interpretation of Janet’s remarks, would lie in the new trainees’ skin color, which allows Jack to minimize the difference between the conventional trainees and the immigrants (to the extent that this difference would be reduced, according to him, to their skin colors).

When she realizes that she was probably misunderstood, Janet ends up recalling everything that, according to her, differentiates trainees from temporary immigrant workers: “Someone who left his country, who left his family, who hasn’t worked in his domain for three years or five years, who has experienced the war” (lines 173-174). In other words, she highlights several traits that go far beyond the question of skin color. This stages the immigrant worker in an abbreviated version of the migratory route of any foreign person wanting to settle in a new country. The typical trajectory that Janet brings up here is thus supposed to show how far this case is moving away from the conventional case that Jack established as a reference, which seems to be confirmed by Mary when she aligns herself with Janet, stating that “He has different needs” (line 176).

Jack and Janet thus express divergent voices, as they confront each other on how to define the process of welcoming these new temporary employees. Moreover, in their discourses, we can hear other voices that manifest themselves: on the one hand, through the figure of the typical intern (ventriloquized by Jack) and, on the other hand, through the figure of the worker coming from elsewhere (ventriloquized by Janet). If Jack and Janet seem to agree that these two figures might represent a certain level of requirements for employees and managers, they differ in the nature of this requirement. While Jack sees new temporary workers as demanding too much attention from other employees, Janet insists on the need to be sensitive to the trajectory of these people, who have not been able to work in their field for sometimes as long as three to five years.

These examples demonstrate how team members negotiate the tensions between institutional colorblindness and multiculturalism norms by treating the two poles as “equally valued, interdependent, and intertwined with each other” (Putnam et al., 2016, p. 127). The two perspectives that confront each

other here, namely colorblindness and the identification of differences, are the same two perspectives we noted in our literature review as they correspond to some current issues in the diversification process undertaken in this organization. The conceptual paradigm from which Jack's reaction to diversity emanates mirror Thomas and Ely's (1996) fairness and discrimination paradigm mentioned earlier.

Commitment to being blind to difference is not encouraging the expression of difference and in doing so, members can resist the diversity they claim to value through the implementation of a new diversity program (Thomas & Ely, 1996, cf. p. 3). We can also see a form of *disappropriation* on Jack's part to the extent that the values and norms that the program appears to promote are not really what matters to him when it is time to make important decision regarding diversity topics. Jack seems to be the spokesperson of the *status quo*, when he defines the parameters of the project following the usual norms of the organization. According to this view, cultural differences should not be put forward in the definition of a new welcoming structure.

Janet, for her part, wants to redefine the welcoming structure by highlighting the differences as well as the particular needs that inevitably arise from this. We see in this excerpt that Jack and Janet have two different interpretations of the way in which one should define a welcoming structure for new employees, that is, *two different ways to ventriloquize what the situation dictates or requires*. Each of them has their own point of view on the issue, which seems to reflect their attachment to certain norms and principles. For Jack, there should be no difference between welcoming an immigrant worker and a university trainee. If (and only if) these workers are similar to conventional trainees, there is no problem, since the employees of his unit are used to it: "there are roughly twenty of them [interns] per year" (lines 155-156).

For Janet, however, workers of different cultural backgrounds have different needs (lines 173-174). In other words, we see two different ways of talking about the future direction of the diversity program proposed here. On the one hand, there is a situation that, according to Jack, would eventually require no special adaptation (even if he expresses doubts about it, which also leads him to express certain concerns about workload issues). On the other hand, there is a situation that, as Janet points out, would rather require cultural sensitivity on the part of the services in order to meet these immigrants' special needs. At this point, the appropriation seems to be quite differentiated (Abdellah, 2007) and each member invokes various figures to justify their position.

At line 178, we also see Janet emphasizing this point when she says, "It's not true that it's simple, it's really not simple," which explicitly contradicts the way Jack just translated her words. While trying to reassure Jack about the immigrants' skills ("You can expect a benefit because the diploma is there, the experience is there" (lines 178-179)), she recalls how much it will probably require his unit to accommodate these new employees ("But maybe it won't be that easy" (lines 179-180)). While Jack tries to react ("Uh I..." (line 182)), Janet goes on to say that she wonders about how to meet the requirements that she herself just recalled. As she mentions, they will probably require a preparation ("I don't know how we are going to proceed, but probably in the preparation" (line 184)), which is confirmed by Mary when the latter specifies "Maybe the sponsors' preparation" (line 186). In other words, Janet does not only recall what the upcoming internships require, she also shows that she seems ready, for her part, to meet these requirements. As a good organizer, she positions herself as capable of responding to what she thinks the situation will require.

To fulfill this requirement precisely, Jack then evokes the selection process, which, he imagines, will be very strict in this case (lines 193-195). According to him, this process will no doubt ensure that the selection of candidates is based on their capacity to integrate (lines 194-195). To some extent, this is a reality that Jack brings up as if to reassure himself about the degree of requirements expected, thus reducing again the new immigrant worker case closer to the regular trainee case he already knows.

We then see Janet responding by explicitly positioning herself as a spokesperson for the program ("I'm going to be a little the guardian of why this program is proposed" (lines 197-198)). When she speaks here, it is the protector of the program who is therefore speaking, a protector who asks that "we adhere to the principle that there are people who did not have their chance" (lines 198-199), but "who deserve it" (line 199) and who have "all the skills" (line 200). By this act of explicit ventriloquism, the

program's interests and objectives are supposed to express themselves, as if to finally put all the cards on the table about the requirements expected.

Once again, she wonders about the stakes linked to these requirements ("Is it because the integration is going to be harder that we are going to put him aside, because meanwhile, we have to keep the business running and everything?" (lines 200-202)). We can therefore see another tension beginning to emerge, which results from two injunctions that sometimes appear incompatible: creating a more diverse and inclusive environment versus ensuring a certain efficiency and fluidity in the conduct and operations of the business.

We can see, on one side, the use of the business case argument: diversity should help the organization to achieve greater performance. On the other side, we see the use of more moral-oriented argument: we should do what is necessary to foster the integration of these new immigrant workers. In terms of appropriation, the business case opens a door to an instrumental appropriation of the program. This appropriation can also reveal a form of "passive backlash" (Davidson & Proudford, 2012, p.254). Business imperative can be invoked to justify the decision to reject a program that promotes diversity but is not completely aligned with what the business implies. However, for Janet, the appropriation seems less instrumental, since the program seems to be an end in itself, given that this would be, for her, the right thing to do.

In this sense, Janet also says she does not know how to strike a balance between the imperatives of the program (fostering the integration of cultural minorities) and the business imperatives. The polyphonic vision of discourse (Bakhtin, 1981) allows us to recognize the voices of several figures in a single turn of talk. Two divergent voices can indeed be identified in Janet's discourse, two imperatives that confront each other: the imperative of giving immigrant workers a chance and the imperative of ensuring the efficiency and productivity of the business. Janet thus oscillates between these two imperatives as she appears to experience tensions in the process. Everything then happens as if the future situation remained equivocal. In other words, reducing these two voices to "one voice" does not seem possible or desirable at this moment.

Jack seems, for the time being, less sensitive to this tension, when we see him again voicing an imperative of efficiency and fluidity, which, according to him, must take precedence over the imperatives of the program. To do this, we note that he claims that he does take the interests of the immigrant worker into account ("I am not helping him if I get him in the organization, and then he has too big a curve to reach, I won't help him either. EBF is not necessarily a company to help him do so" (lines 204-206)). In other words, according to Jack, it is also in the immigrant workers' interests that a principle of efficiency and fluidity prevail over the benevolence that one might have in this kind of situation.

In doing this, we see him ventriloquizing Janet when he declares that he has understood what she said ("I understand what you mean Janet" (line 206)) by translating what is implicitly presented as the requirements of the program (lines 193-194). It is as if he wanted to create the conditions of a certain *monophony* in which the two interlocutors would recognize each other. He presents his interpretation of the objectives for the program as a "*win win*" (line 209) situation where each party can have satisfaction: the immigrant worker and EBF. To do this, however, the worker cannot have "a steep curve" (line 211), at the risk of finding the situation "difficult" (lines 212).

Through this analysis, we saw how the members of the project team ventriloquize several figures in their conversation. These figures are mobilized to recall existing practices (through the figure of the trainee) and to evoke new practices that are to be put in place (through the figure of the immigrant worker). They variously dictate the conditions for welcoming these new workers. Indeed, if one advocates, like Jack, a certain *status quo*, the stake is obvious that one wants to recall the existing norms and what they dictate. This position also shows us a commitment and attachment to security. On the other hand, if one wants to change existing practices, like Janet, the challenge is to show how the new workers' needs are different and require a different approach.

Members of the project team (Jack, Janet and Mary) are ventriloquists to the extent that they make figures speak to give meaning and weight to their words. In addition, they are also "puppets" when they appear to be guided and engaged by these figures, which are principles (giving workers from immigrant

backgrounds a chance vs. concerns for fairness) and/or imperatives (promoting the integration of cultural minorities vs. the efficiency or fluidity of the business).

We can also observe how the exchange between Janet, Mary and Jack does not really seem to lead to Jack's appropriation of the program principles. He is using arguments that are reflecting an instrumental appropriation of the program which is more likely to lead to disappropriation. He constantly returns to questions of efficiency which, according to him, must prevail in this type of situation. In ventriloquial terms, the appropriation would consist, for Jack, in the adoption of principles and imperatives that seem to animate Janet and Mary. In other words, this would require the recognition of differences (immigrant workers deserve to be given a chance, we must recognize their reality, we must be sensitive to the trajectory of these people, etc.).

As we observed, these principles are never taken up by Jack, who constantly returns to the imperatives of efficiency and what he considers to be their primacy over his interlocutors' concerns. Progressive appropriation would imply at least the recognition of a certain *equivocality* of the situation. However, even though Jack seems to say, toward the end of the excerpt, that he understands Janet and Mary's viewpoint (line 206), we also see that he reappropriates their statements by making them say something that the two women eventually reject, thus marking the failure of his appropriation and therefore his disappropriation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this article, we examined how members of a diversity project team come to negotiate new norms and practices during the implementation of an ethnocultural diversity initiative. Our research question was: *how do organizational members negotiate the appropriation or disappropriation of norms and principles on which a new discourse on diversity is based?* We believe that the ventriloquial approach developed here helps us address this research question by rethinking the process of implementing diversity initiatives. It contributes to a better understanding of the process of appropriation/disappropriation by focusing on what leads actors to different directions. By looking more closely at the interactions of the project team members, we can see how they make norms and principles say things to assert their viewpoints regarding what a new diversity program should consist of.

Also, the tensional interplays has important consequences for the becoming of the program. It reveals that through various discursive practices, including the mobilization of figures, the establishment or failure of a diversity initiative emerges largely from an appropriation/disappropriation process. This suggests that the emergence of tensions has implications for diversity-related changes at the micro-macro level. Even if diversity-related meetings are always local and situated, the decisions that are made locally can have, in some cases, important impact at the organization level. From this perspective, the adoption of inclusive practices does not only depend on what is mandated by senior management. Rather, it also and maybe especially results from discussions among individuals within the organization.

Through our ventriloquial analysis, we can see how certain norms, values and principles are privileged in decision making processes, making appropriation of the program somewhat difficult. Jack does not appear to appropriate the diversity program, because he cannot find ways to reconcile this initiative with what he already values—that is, what he already appropriated—as an organizational member (efficiency, security, some specific selection procedures, etc.). As far as he is concerned, *the diversity initiative does not therefore seem to pass the appropriation test*. In his case, the tension between what he values and what Janet values seems intractable, which means that the values to which they are respectively attached appear to contradict each other, that is, require incompatible courses of action.

Members' dependence on the business case can thus ruin any efforts to engage in a discourse about diversity. As we saw, tensions posing at the intersection of old and current organizational practices can reveal subtle forms of resistance. Thomas *et al.* (2004) suggest that the resistance to diversity perpetuated by organization is simply a reflection of larger cultural ideologies that resist inclusion and diversity, like color-blind ideals. Our ventriloquial analysis suggests that we should especially consider the tensional

interplays between figures in everyday talk as these tensions reveal different forms of commitment and resistance.

If we consider this implementation as being essentially a communication process, we can then see more clearly what concretely goes in the direction of diversification or, on the contrary, what hinders such initiatives. This research sheds light on the process of implementation of diversity initiatives, focusing on how members of the organization adapt and transform the program and practices of the organization. It seems that as they are trying to adapt and appropriate the program, they are also trying to reconcile competing discourses (business case and moral argument) on diversity to accommodate the complexity of the implementation process.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The interest of this research for practitioners lies on different levels. Our analysis highlights the emergence of three major tensions: 1) commitment to security vs. commitment to embrace diversity as a positive change, 2) institutional colorblindness vs. multiculturalism norms and 3) creating a more diverse and inclusive environment vs. ensuring a certain efficiency in the conduct of the business. As Abdellah (2007) points out, some tensions may resemble what we may call “differentiated appropriation.” This type of appropriation reveals a difference in the way the program is understood. This kind of appropriation can also become a source of creativity and a new opportunity for change, since innovative solutions must be found to reconcile different viewpoints. Also, the success or failure of any diversity initiative is determined by what leaders do with these tensions. When tensions are ignored or addressed ineffectively, it becomes a negative force that can threaten any undertaking to effect organizational change.

The emergence of tensions in the process of implementing diversity initiatives can also be an interesting indicator for identifying signs of resistance or obstacles to a significant “diversity shift,” meaning the adoption of new practices (recruitment, hiring, selection, etc.) in the organization. Moreover, resistance to diversity often takes the form of challenging changes in norms and principles. As we saw earlier, organizational members are somewhat more attached to some figures than others and these figures usually represent the status quo, that is, the norms and values that already exist in the organization. Therefore, managers need to develop greater awareness about the ways organizational members participate in a system of inclusion and exclusion by being committed to certain norms and values.

In particular, we show that diversity initiatives provide great opportunities for open discussions and dialogues about diversity topics. The success of diversity-related initiatives seems to depend ultimately on members’ appropriation of the program, mainly because conversations can serve as the foundation upon which managers and employees can build an understanding of what is proposed. Through their interactions, they can also better discuss and negotiate the added-value (moral, political, social, economic...) of this type of initiative. In other words, appropriation is gained on the ground of discussions and not only on the dissemination of pro-diversity messages, even if they can also have their effectiveness. Even if the excerpt we analyzed reveals the story of a semi-failure (to the extent that Jack does not seem to have made much progress in his vision of the program), the discussion at least has the merit of putting forward arguments which, perhaps will make him progress in his journey and reflection about diversity.

Diversity-related change is also about formulating more inclusive alternatives to current organizational norms and values to create a new local discourse on diversity. To put it differently, creating a new local discourse on diversity is linked to the appropriation of the new diversity initiative. Appropriation occurs when organizational members end up invoking and cherishing principles and norms that foster greater inclusion. Thus, sometimes contradictory messages on diversity can be sent by the organization, if we do not pay sufficient attention to the current norms that guide the definition of a new diversity project. Organizations need to find better way to incorporate competing commitments when creating new diversity discourse. Diversity shifts do not happen overnight because the implementation of diversity initiatives also involves changes in ways of thinking and acting. Future research can continue to explore tensional constitutions of diversity initiatives through a ventriloquial lens.

LIMITATIONS

We have aimed to provide an analysis that is limited to the experience of a particular organization, in order to describe settings and participants in rich details. We chose to present the “microfoundations” of a specific diversity initiative in the form of a case study. The goal was to provide a thick description that is deep enough to provide as much detail as possible about this context rather than only report a series of facts about the implementation process. In our case, it involves describing a slice of interaction to help other scholars decide about the applicability of the findings to other diversity-related initiatives.

REFERENCES

- Allen, B.J. (1995). “Diversity” and organizational communication, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 23(2), 143-155.
- Allen, B. J. (2011). *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press.
- Anderson, D. L. (2005). “What you'll say is...”: represented voice in organizational change discourse. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18(1), 63-77.
- Avery, D.R., Johnson, C.D., (2012). Now you see it, now you don't: Mixed messages regarding workforce diversity. In Thomas, K. M. (dir), *Diversity resistance in organizations*. New-York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. (traduit par Caryl Emerson et Michael Holquist). Austin : University of Texas Press.
- Barak, M. E. M. (2013). *Managing diversity: Toward a globally inclusive workplace*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bassett-Jones, N. (2005). *The Paradox of Diversity Management, Creativity and Innovation*. Blackwell Publishing, 14(2), 168-175.
- Billot, J., Goddard, J. T. et Cranston, N. (2007). How principals manage ethnocultural diversity: Learnings from three countries. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 35(2), 3-19.
- Belova, O. (2010). Polyphony and the sense of self in flexible organizations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(1), 67-76.
- Boxenbaum, E. (2006). Lost in translation the making of Danish diversity management. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49(7), 939-948.
- Crandall, C. S., Eshleman, A., & O'brien, L. (2002). Social norms and the expression and suppression of prejudice: the struggle for internalization. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 82(3), 359.
- Cheney, G., & Tompkins, P.K. (1987). Coming to terms with organizational identification and commitment. *Central States Speech Journal*, 38(1), 1-15.
- Chreim, S. (2006). Managerial frames and institutional discourses of change: Employee appropriation and resistance. *Organization Studies*, 27(9), 1261-1287.
- Chrobot-Mason, D., Hays-Thomas, R. & Wishik., H. (2012). Understanding and Defusing Resistance to Diversity Training and Learning. In Thomas, K. M. (dir), *Diversity resistance in organizations* (pp. 23-54). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Cooren, F. (2010). *Action and agency in dialogue: Passion, incarnation and ventriloquism*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Cooren, F. (2012). Communication theory at the center: Ventriloquism and the communicative constitution of reality. *Journal of Communication*, 62(1), 1-20.
- Cooren, F. (2015). *Organizational discourse: Communication and constitution*. London: Polity.
- Cooren, F., Bencherki, N., Chaput, M. et Vasquez C. (2015). The communicative constitution of strategy-making: exploring fleeting moments of strategy. In Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L., Seidl,

- D. et Vaara, E. (dir.). *Cambridge handbook of strategy as practice*. (2e éd., p. 365-388). Cambridge University Press.
- Cooren, F., Matte, F., Benoit-Barné, C., & Brummans, B. H. J. M. (2013). Communication as ventriloquism: A grounded-in-action approach to the study of organizational tensions. *Communication Monographs*, 80(3), 255-277.
- Cox, T. H., & Blake, S. (1991). Managing cultural diversity: Implications for organizational competitiveness. *The Executive*, 5(3), 45-56.
- Cox, T. (1994). *Cultural diversity in organizations: Theory, research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Curtis, E. F., Dreachslin, J. L., & Sinioris, M. (2007). Diversity and cultural competence training in health care organizations: hallmarks of success. *The Health Care Manager*, 26(3), 255-262.
- Davidson M.N., & Proudford K.L., (2012). Cycles of resistance: how dominants and subordinants collude to undermine diversity efforts in organizations. In Thomas, K. M. (dir), *Diversity resistance in organizations* (pp. 249-272). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. et Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of management journal*, 50(1), 25-32.
- Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative science quarterly*, 46(2), 229-273.
- Ely, R. J. (2004). A field study of group diversity, participation in diversity education programs, and performance. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 25(6), 755-780.
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L. (2004). Organizations as discursive constructions. *Communication theory*, 14(1), 5-26.
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L. L. (2014). Organizational discourse analysis. In L. L. Putnam & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 271–296). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE
- Fenton, C., & Langley, A. (2011). Strategy as practice and the narrative turn. *Organization studies*, 32(9), 1171-1196.
- Foldy, E.g., & Buckley, T.R. (2014). Color Minimization: The Theory and Practice of Addressing Race and Ethnicity at Work. In Thomas, K. M. and Plaut, V. (dir), *Diversity ideologies in organizations* (pp. 88-111). New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Friday, E., & Friday, S. S. (2003). Managing diversity using a strategic planned change approach. *Journal of Management Development*, 22(10), 863-880.
- Friedman, R. A., & Davidson, M. N. (2001). Managing diversity and second-order conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 12(2), 132-153.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory*. Palgrave, London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Guerardi, S. (2012) *How to conduct a practice-based study*. Northampton, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing
- Hollister, L. A., Day, N. E. et Jesaitis, P. T. (1993). Diversity programs: Key to competitiveness or just another fad? *Organization Development Journal*, 11(4), 49-59.
- Hong, X., Falter, M. M., & Fecho, B. (2017). Embracing tension: using Bakhtinian theory as a means for data analysis. *Qualitative Research*, 17(1), 20-36.
- Janssens, M., & Zanoni, P. (2005). Many diversities for many services: Theorizing diversity (management) in service companies. *Human Relations*, 58(3), 311-340.
- Jarzabkowski, P. et Seidl, D. (2008). The role of meetings in the social practice of strategy. *Organization Studies*, 29(11), 1391-426
- Jarzabkowski, P. et Paul Spee, A. (2009). Strategy-as-practice: A review and future directions for the field. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(1), 69-95.
- Jansen, W. S., Vos, M. W., Otten, S., Podsiadlowski, A., & van der Zee, K. I. (2016). Colorblind or colorful? How diversity approaches affect cultural majority and minority employees. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 46(2), 81-93.

- Jefferson, G. (1984). *On stepwise transition from talk about a trouble to inappropriately next-positioned matters*. In J.M. Atkinson and J.C. Heritage (Eds.) *Structures of social action: Studies of conversation analysis* (pp. 191-222). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kalev, A., Dobbin, F. et Kelly, E. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies. *American sociological review*, 71(4), 589-617.
- Kalonaitye, V. (2010). The case of vanishing borders: Theorizing diversity management as internal border control. *Organization*, 17(1), 31-52.
- Kaplan, S. et Orlikowski, W. J. (2013). Temporal work in strategy making. *Organization science*, 24(4), 965-995.
- Kirby, E. L., & Harter, L. M. (2001). Discourses of diversity and the quality of work life: The character and costs of the managerial metaphor. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15(1), 121-127.
- Kersten, A. (2000). Diversity management. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(3), 235–248. <http://doi.org/10.1108/09534810010330887>
- King, E. B., Dawson, J. F., Kravitz, D. A., & Gulick, L. (2012). A multilevel study of the relationships between diversity training, ethnic discrimination and satisfaction in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(1), 5-20.
- Kulik, C. T., & Roberson, L. (2008). Common goals and golden opportunities: Evaluations of diversity education in academic and organizational settings. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(3), 309-331.
- Kulik, C. T., & Roberson, L. (2008). Diversity initiative effectiveness: What organizations can (and cannot) expect from diversity recruitment, diversity training, and formal mentoring programs. In Brief, A. P. (Ed.), *Diversity at work* (pp. 265-316). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kwon, W., Clarke, I., & Wodak, R. (2014). Micro-Level Discursive Strategies for Constructing Shared Views around Strategic Issues in Team Meetings. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(2), 265-290.
- Lindsay, C. (2013). Things that Go Wrong in Diversity Training. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 7(6), 18-33.
- Long, Z., & Wilhoit, E. D. (2018). Disciplined freedom, branded authenticity, and dependable independence: how tensions enact flexibility in lifestyle blogging careers. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 46(3), 368-387.
- Long, Z. Selzer King A., & Buzzanell P.M. (2018): Ventriloquial voicings of parenthood in graduate school: an intersectionality analysis of work-life negotiations, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 46(2), 223-242.
- Mannix, E., & Neale, M. A. (2005). What differences make a difference? The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations. *Psychological science in the public interest*, 6(2), 31-55.
- Markus, H. R., Steele, C. M., & Steele, D. M. (2000). Colorblindness as a barrier to inclusion: Assimilation and nonimmigrant minorities. *Daedalus*, 129(4), 233-259.
- Mease, J. J. (2012). Reconsidering consultants' strategic use of the business case for diversity. *Journal of applied communication research*, 40(4), 384-402.
- Mease, J. J. (2016). Embracing discursive paradox: Consultants navigating the constitutive tensions of diversity work. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 30(1), 59-83.
- Mighty, E. J. (1991). Valuing Workforce Diversity: A Model or Organizational Change. *Canadian Journal of Administration* 8(2). 64-71
- Mio, J. S., & Awakuni, G. I. (2000). *Resistance to Multiculturalism. Issues and Interventions*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- McClure, K. (1996). The institutional subordination of contested issues: the case of Pittsburgh's steelworkers and ministers. *Communication Quarterly*, 44(4), 487-501.
- McVittie, C., McKinlay, A., & Widdicombe, S. (2008). Organizational knowledge and discourse of diversity in employment. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 21(3), 348–366. <http://doi.org/10.1108/09534810810874822>

- Meeussen, L., Otten, S., & Phalet, K. (2014). Managing diversity: How leaders' multiculturalism and colorblindness affect work group functioning. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 17(5), 629-644.
- Mumby, D. K. (Ed.) (2011). *Reframing Difference in Organizational Communication Studies*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage publications.
- Nishii, L.H., Khattb, J., Shemla., M., Paluch., R.M. (2018). A Multi-level process of model for understanding diversity practice effectiveness. *Academy of Management Annals* 12(1), 37–82.
- Neyland, D. (2008). *Organizational ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paluck, E. L. et Green, D. P. (2009). Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 339-367.
- Parker, P. S. (2005). *Race, Gender, and Leadership*. Mahawah, NJ: Laurence Elbaum Associates.
- Passmore, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Diversity in coaching: Working with gender, culture, race and age*. London : Kogan Page Publishers.
- Pietikäinen, S., & Dufva, H. (2006). Voices in discourses: Dialogism, critical discourse analysis and ethnic identity. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 10(2), 205-224.
- Point, S. (2010). Communiquer sur la diversité. *Revue française de gestion*, 36(7), 49-64.
- Plaut, V. C. (2002). Cultural models of diversity in America: The psychology of difference and inclusion. In R. Shweder, M. Minow, & H.R. Markus (Eds.), *Engaging cultural differences: The multicultural challenge in liberal democracies* (pp. 365-395). New-York: Russel Sage Foundation Press.
- Prasad, P., & Mills, A. (1997). *Managing the organizational melting pot: Dilemmas of workplace diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage Publications.
- Prasad, P., Pringle, J. K., & Konrad, A. M. (2006). Examining the contours of workplace diversity. In Konrad, A.M, Prasad, P. & Pringle, J.K.(Eds.), *Handbook of workplace diversity* (p.1-22). Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage Publications.
- Pratt, M. G., & Foreman, P. O. (2000). Classifying managerial responses to multiple organizational identities. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 18-42.
- Putnam, L. L., Fairhurst, G. T., & Banghart, S. (2016). Contradictions, dialectics, and paradoxes in organizations: A constitutive approach. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 10(1), 65-171.
- Roberson, Q. M., & Stevens, C. K. (2006). Making sense of diversity in the workplace: Organizational justice and language abstraction in employees' accounts of diversity-related incidents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(2), 379-391
- Robichaud, D., & Benoit-Barné, C. (2010). L'épreuve de la conversation: comment se négocie la mise en œuvre des normes dans l'écriture d'un texte organisationnel. *Études de communication*, 34(1), 41-60.
- Salée, D. (2010). Penser l'aménagement de la diversité ethnoculturelle au Québec: mythes, limites et possibles de l'interculturalisme. *Politique et Sociétés*, 29(1), 145-180.
- Scott, K. A., Heathcote, J. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2011). The diverse organization: Finding gold at the end of the rainbow. *Human Resource Management*, 50(6), 735–755.
- Seidl, D., & Guérard, S., (2015). Meetings and workshops as strategy practices. In Golsorkhi, D., Rouleau, L., Seidl, D., & Vaara, E. (dir.). *Cambridge handbook of strategy as practice* (pp. 564-581). Cambridge University Press.
- Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Schwabenland, C., & Tomlinson, F. (2015). Shadows and light: Diversity management as phantasmagoria. *Human Relations*, 68(12), 1913-1936.
- Sleeter, C. E. (1991). *Empowerment through multicultural education*. New-York, NY: SUNY Press.
- Stevens, F. G., Plaut, V. C., et Sanchez-Burks, J. (2008). Unlocking the benefits of diversity: All-inclusive multiculturalism and positive organizational change. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 44(1), 116-133.

- Takaki, R. (1993). Multiculturalism: Battleground or meeting ground? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530(1), 109-121.
- Tatar, M., & Horenczyk, G. (2003). Diversity-related burnout among teachers. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 19(4), 397-408.
- Taylor, J. R., & Van Every, E. J. (2011). *The situated organization: Case Studies in the Pragmatics of Communication Research*. New York: Routledge.
- Thomas, D.A. (2004). *Diversity as Strategy*. Harvard Business Review. 1-10.
- Thomas, D. A., & Ely, R. J. (1996). Making differences matter. *Harvard business review*, 74(5), 79-90.
- Thomas, K. M. (2012). *Diversity resistance in organizations*. New-York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Thomas, K. M., Mack, D.A., & Montagliani, A. (2004). Challenging diversity myths: A critical analysis of backlash. In P. Stockdale & F. Crosby's (Eds.), *The psychology and management of diversity in organizations* (pp. 31-51). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Tomlinson, F., & Schwabenland, C. (2009). Reconciling competing discourses of diversity? The UK non-profit sector between social justice and the business case. *Organization*, 17(1), 101–121.
- Trethewey, G. E. A., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2004). Special issue introduction: Practicing disorganization: The development of applied perspectives on living with tension. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32(2), 81-88.
- Trittin, H., & Schoeneborn, D. (2015). Diversity as Polyphony: Reconceptualizing Diversity Management from a Communication-Centered Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 22(1), 1-18.
- Van Ewijk, A. R. (2013). Diversity and diversity policy: diving into fundamental differences. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 24(5), 680–694.
<http://doi.org/10.1108/09534811111158921>
- Vaara, E., & Whittington, R. (2012). Strategy-as-practice: taking social practices seriously. *Academy of Management Annals*, 6(1), 285-336.
- Vásquez, C., Sergi, V., & Cordelier, B. (2013). From being branded to doing branding: Studying representation practices from a communication-centered approach. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(2), 135-146.
- Van de Ven, A. H., & Poole, M. S. (2005). Alternatives approaches for studying organizational change. *Organization Studies*, 26(9), 1377-1404.
- Von Bergen, C. W., Soper, B., & Foster, T. (2002). Unintended negative effects of diversity management. *Public personnel management*, 31(2), 239-251.
- Wasserman, I.C., Gallegos, V., & Ferdman, B.M., (2012). Dancing with Resistance: leadership challenges in fostering a culture of inclusion. In Thomas, K. M. (Ed.), *Diversity resistance in organizations* (pp.175-200 New-York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing* (Topics in social psychology series). New-York: McGraw-Hill.
- Whittington, R. (2003). The work of strategizing and organizing: for a practice perspective. *Strategic organization*, 1(1), 117-125.
- Wodak, R., Kwon, W., & Clarke, I. (2011). ‘Getting people on board’: Discursive leadership for consensus building in team meetings. *Discourse & Society*, 22(5), 592-644.