

**The Men Need to Be Involved:
A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender+ Equity Narratives**

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Abstract

We apply a critical feminist methodology, Critical Frame Analysis (CFA), to discourses regarding gender+ equity efforts undertaken at our university in order to reveal frames that have mobilized—and/or have the potential to mobilize—institutional change for gender+ equity. After briefly considering consequential cultural shifts and changes in cultural frames regarding men's roles in gender+ (in)equity, we apply a rhetorical/critical approach to analyze narratives culled from two decades of archival data, along with present-day perspectives provided by the co-authors and four interviewees. Our analysis yielded five frames: Women's Representation, Institutions Create (In)Equity, Men as Allies, All Hands On Deck, and Intersectional Gender+. Finally, we compared our findings with a typology of narrative frames to gauge effectiveness of previous and future gender+ equity efforts. Our university has traversed some measurable cultural distance on the journey to gender+ equity, yet stable and intersectional manifestations of gender+ justice remain ahead of us.

Keywords: men gender equity advocates, critical frame analysis, Advocates and Allies

The Men Need to Be Involved: A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender+ Equity Narratives

One commonly held, though also disputed, national narrative in the United States (U.S.) goes something like, “We are all created equal and we all have equal opportunities for a good life” (Anthony, 2020). When ongoing injustices such as classism, racism, sexism, or ableism, which have been present from prior to the country’s founding are acknowledged, causal interpretations may range from locating the inequity ‘problem’ within the individuals/groups who are experiencing inequity, to identifying systemic processes as core drivers. The discussion then turns to what constitutes reasoned remedies (e.g., personal behavior or cultural transformation) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Meyerson & Tompkins, 2007; Sayce, 2003). Our appraisal is both/and: social systems are comprised of and orchestrated by individuals, and individuals are profoundly guided by the systems within which we reside (Bandura, 2000; Bateson, 1979/2002; Dailey-Hebert & Dennis, 2015; Eoyang, 2007; Sanders & Mahalingam, 2012). Working from this perspective, we assert that to effectively influence individual behaviors as well as institutional praxis toward equity, we must find ways to more clearly understand and speak to the core underlying beliefs that create and uphold our shared social worlds.

One well-established approach to identifying assumptions embedded in social narratives is Critical Frame Analysis (CFA) (van der Haar & Verloo, 2016; van Hulst & Yanow, 2014; Verloo, 2005). Working with our North Dakota State University’s (NDSU) ADVANCE Institutional Transformation initiative, we examine cultural discourses that have effectively mobilized—or have the potential to mobilize—institutional change for gender equity. Following a rhetorical/critical approach developed by Verloo (2005) in her critique of persuasive language used in discussions of gender equality, we work with four CFA questions to organize and

analyze early archival documents selected from two decades of data available for this study. Applying the same four questions, we next engage a present-day critique of our ADVANCE work, with a focus on our men's gender equity Advocates and Allies program. We then compare our findings with a typology of narrative frames and offer recommendations for men's gender+ equity programming.

Setting the Context: Cultural Discourses and Our Organizational Terrain

Before turning to our analysis, we briefly expand on understandings of cultural discourses and our reasoning for taking this analytical approach. Across macro, meso, and micro levels, cultures arise from and are (re)formed through social communications or discourses, producing “ways of thinking, concepts, symbols, representations (e.g., of the self and others), norms, rules, strategies, embodied in... power relations” (Shi, 2016, p. 2). The contours of these discourses are shaped by particular perspectives and frames of reference, and cultures are modified when novel perspectives and/or frames alter beliefs and behaviors (Blackmore, 2010; Situngkir, 2004; Spitzberg, 2014). Zippel and Ferree (2019) assert that “debates over the nature of knowledge are part of the change process” and suggest that investigations of the “gender expertise” developed through ADVANCE efforts offer a pathway for “further self-reflexive processes of institutional transformation” (p. 818). We concur.

Prominent cultural frames of reference regarding definitions of gender have expanded from assumptions of a woman/man binary to a recognition of gender as a nuanced, intersectional, and complex biopsychosocial process of identity development and expression (BrckaLorenz et al., 2017; Clare, 2009; Hill Collins, 2000; Pitcher, 2017). Individual experiences of gender often may not match the binary. In the following sections of this article, we will use “gender+” to incorporate this expanded conceptualization. Still, being gendered as either/or is a consequential

social reality similar to being raced as Black or White. Although language used to express the experience of gender+ is burgeoning, a gender+ binary has been presumed during much of the 20 years included in this study. As discussed in later sections, our men faculty gender+ equity Advocates and Allies program, which is a central focus of this study and a prominent outcome of our ADVANCE award, continues to evolve to reflect shifting cultural discourses around personal/social identities and the lived realities they represent. Note that while we use the imprecise though concise woman/man binary within the current paper, we do so with a gender+ construal firmly in mind; preferred pronouns and gender+ identity status are used when known.

Relatedly, discourses about men's involvement in gender+ equity efforts have shifted over the past 20 years, from men as nearly invisible, to assumptions of men as the problem, to a recognition that women and men are differently though substantially harmed by gender+ inequity—and that both benefit when gender+ equity is realized (Leek, 2018). We take note that, similar to gender+, additional important cultural shifts have registered in language used to represent several identity statuses. For example, Annamma, Connor, and Ferri (2013) have joined other intellectual activists in the use of punctuation marks to interrupt ableist assumptions: “We deliberately use ‘dis/ability’ instead of ‘disability’...[because]... the ‘/’ in disability disrupts misleading understandings of disability, as it simultaneously conveys the mixture of ability and disability” (p. 24). The phrase, “people of color” (POC) is often rephrased as BIPOC (Garcia, 2020); according to the founders of The BIPOC Project, this reframing “aims to build authentic and lasting solidarity among Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), in order to undo Native invisibility, anti-Blackness... and advance racial justice” (Mcgee & Kanagasingam, n.d., Our Mission, para. 1). These language conventions represent meaningful shifts in the frames of equity discourses and lend further support to the need to apply

intersectional lenses to gender+ justice work; gender+ simultaneously intersects across all identity backgrounds.

The following illustrates our assertions thus far: To broadly assess influential institutional discourses, we might simply ask if our organizational praxis reflects “master” narratives of dominant culture and thereby fosters status quo outcomes or reflects oppositional “counter” narratives intended to promote desired organizational change (Goffman, 1975; Verhoeven, 1985). For example, if a narrative of academic meritocracy prevails—that is, the presumption that individuals gain positions of power and authority due to their own intellectual prowess—then organizational praxis will (re)produce the current state of affairs through an overrepresentation of people who have accrued unearned over-advantaging: white, affluent, hetero-cisgendered non-disabled men. This meritocratic master narrative is rampant in higher education (Carnevale et al., 2018) and essentially represents an “aristocracy posing as meritocracy” (Carnevale as quoted by Berman, 2019, para. 4).

Instead, if a narrative of institutional accountability for redressing long-running social inequities is prominent, then organizational praxis will produce increasing representation of people toward whom unearned disadvantaging has conventionally been leveled: Black, Indigenous, and other persons considered ‘people of color,’ white women, gender+ nonconformists and people of all backgrounds who have experienced dis/ability or economic disenfranchisement. This social accountability counter narrative resonates with the shared national narrative upon which the aspirational status of higher education in the U.S. rests: we are all equal and have a right to equal opportunities for a good life. Our critical analysis is intended to inform and motivate further efforts to meet those aspirations.

With this larger macro cultural context in mind, the stage is set for a meso level view of our organizational terrain via a review of our campus ADVANCE efforts and our Advocates and Allies men's gender+ equity program. From the earliest discussions of the proposal that eventually garnered an ADVANCE IT grant in 2008, both STEM and non-STEM faculty, staff, and administrators were at the table because we understood the chilly climate for women was an institution-wide predicament (Burnett, Bilen-Green, McGeorge, & Anicha, 2012). The proposal blended activities from previous ADVANCE programs with the similarly crucial institutional readiness work that had been accomplished through various campus-community equity efforts (e.g., antiracism and LGBTQ advocacy) (Anicha, Bilen-Green, & Burnett, 2018) to yield our university's Focus on Resources for Women's Advancement, Recruitment/Retention, and Development (FORWARD) Initiative. The ADVANCE FORWARD project integrated a comprehensive array of programming that sought to offer on-ramps for all stakeholders (Anicha, Bilen-Green, Burnett, Froelich, & Holbrook, 2017). These efforts were collectively aimed at shifting gendered narratives and praxis on our campus.

Our ADVANCE project outlined five main goals for promoting gender+ equity on campus: 1) improve the climate; 2) bolster recruitment; 3) enhance retention; 4) increase promotion and advancement; and 5) create more leadership opportunities. These aspects were deeply grounded in factors previously identified as critical by ADVANCE (see, for example, DeAro et al., 2019). Project activities developed within those goal areas ranged from policy change initiatives, to grants, to workshops (Anicha, Bilen-Green, Burnett, Froelich, & Holbrook, 2017).

One unique feature of the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD initiative is the Advocates and Allies (A&A) program that was created at our university, a model that has been detailed and

evaluated in a number of publications (c.f., Anicha, Bilen-Green, & Burnett, 2018; Anicha et al., 2017; Anicha, Bilen-Green, Burnett, Green, & McGeorge, 2020; Bilen-Green, Carpenter, Doore, Green, Horton, Jellison, Latimer, Levine, & O'Neal, 2015; Bilen-Green, Green, McGeorge, Anicha, & Burnett, 2013). The program consists of Advocates, men faculty who educate themselves about issues of power and privilege as related to issues women faculty face, and Allies, men faculty trained by the Advocates. The essence of the program is for men faculty to learn about gender+ inequity in higher education and at NDSU in particular; to introduce ways to combat gender+ inequity, and to build a supportive network on campus (Anicha, Bilen-Green, & Burnett, 2018). To date, NDSU Advocates have trained and implemented the A&A program in over 30 organizations across the U.S. as well as the American Society of Engineering Education (Anicha et al., 2020).

Methodology and Methods: Critical Frame Analysis

The methodology of discourse analysis is used to analyze social narratives (Guess, 1981; Gunson, 2006; Huspek, 2006; Morrison, 2008; Trix & Psenka, 2003); from that robust field we selected the Critical Frame Analysis (CFA) approach (van der Haar & Verloo, 2016; van Hulst & Yanow, 2014). CFA integrates frame analysis (Goffman, 1975; Rein & Schön, 1996; Verhoeven, 1985) and the study of social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000) in order to examine varied voices in policy making (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007) and other social spheres, while recognizing that some of those voices have more power than others.

Neither qualitative nor quantitative, CFA does not involve counting words and does not thematize thought units (van der Haar & Verloo, 2016). Rather, data selection (or sampling) and analyses are accomplished through the development and application of critical guiding questions that focus on the power individuals wield in policymaking, as well as the interpretations they

bring to the policy and practice at hand (Snow & Benford, 1992; van der Haar & Verloo, 2016). Guiding or sensitizing questions (Choudhry, 2017) have long been used by policy makers to steer problem analyses. However, as a critical feminist methodology (van der Haar & Verloo, 2016; Verloo & Roggebrand, 1996), CFA adds explicit acknowledgement of relationships among actors and analyses in recognition that how a problem is defined directly relates to identification of probable causes and potential solutions.

Critical Guiding Questions

Guiding/sensitizing questions developed by Verloo (2005) and used in this study are: 1) What is wrong or what is the ‘diagnosis’ of the problem?, 2) Who is responsible for the problem or what is attributed as the cause of the problem?, 3) What is the ‘prognosis’ or likely outcome and what is the solution or what should be done to address the problem?, and 4) What is the call for action or who should do something? Select studies that have also applied the CFA approach include analyses of a Dutch ‘gender equality’ policy (Roggebrand & Verloo, 2007; see also, Verloo, 2018), hegemonic discourses in policy making (Lombardo et al., 2010), and health outcomes relationships to sustainable development goals (Spencer et al., 2018).

Data Sources

Our data sources include archival documents, peer-reviewed articles, views of the co-authors of this study, as well as the perspectives of men faculty who have been involved in the A&A program since its inception. These data are selected based on content that reflects responses to the guiding questions of the study, as described above. Although all our data sources are technically samples of convenience and thus vulnerable to unintended bias, such sources are the ‘bread and butter’ of CFA and are thus the intended data for the study.

Data available for our CFA is vast, including decades of demographic and climate statistics collected before, during, and after the ADVANCE IT grant, and evaluation findings from the IT initiative and from a PLAN-D grant that extended the A&A program to four institutions. We also turn to analyses in previously published articles (c.f., Anicha, Bilen-Green, & Burnett, 2018; Anicha et al., 2017; Anicha, Bilen-Green, Burnett, Green, & McGeorge, 2020) and draw on the collective knowledge of the co-authors of this study. Two of the co-authors were part of an initial group of researchers at NDSU who began investigating the possibility of an NSF ADVANCE grant in 2002, saw through the eight-year active period of the grant, and have secured additional NSF funding focused on Advocates and Allies. A third co-author has been actively engaged in NDSU ADVANCE since 2011 as a full participant and researcher. All told, we draw upon 48 combined years of experience.

Finally, we conducted interviews with four Advocates. In the selection of the four men faculty ‘expert interviewees’ we intentionally sought participants likely to reflect divergent views: two STEM and two non-STEM faculty; two continue to be active in the A&A program, though to differing degrees (one has co-facilitated A&A training for over 30 institutions); the two who are no longer directly engaged with the A&A program had previously shared views dissimilar from one another. The four CFA critical guiding questions were emailed to the Advocates following their agreement to participate in the interviews. Interviewees were asked to respond to each question twice: first with recollections regarding the initial development of the A&A program, and then reflecting their perceptions of the program today. Three asked to complete videotaped interviews and one responded directly via email. Video interview responses were transcribed, and each interviewee reviewed and edited their transcript for accuracy.

One limitation of this study is a dearth of demographic information. Although demographics have not been formally collected for the interviewees and co-authors, we note that, not unlike the majority of people working in academia, most of us would identify as white, nondisabled, and cis-gendered. We offer this information in the spirit of a positionality statement in recognition of the many ways that social position informs and/or distorts experience, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world.

Data Analysis

Our analysis was accomplished in three phases. Results for the first two phases of analysis are organized under the four previously articulated critical guiding questions. First, we assembled responses from the perspective of our ADVANCE FORWARD efforts as originally formulated in 2008. These responses were drawn from multiple archival sources, then summarized as a phrase or ‘frame.’ Next, the same four questions were answered through present-day perspectives provided by the co-authors and four A&A program interviewees. In this phase the focus was on what has been learned from the vantage point of hindsight. Finally, we compared our summary frames with the typology of narrative frames identified by Coy, Woehrle, and Maney (2008) to gauge effectiveness of previous and future gender+ equity efforts.

Results

The following results track with the stages of analysis described above. Findings for stages one and two are organized by our study’s critical guiding questions. Stage three is structured as a comparison of our results with the findings of previous CFA scholarship.

Phase 1: CFA Findings, Circa 2008, Our ADVANCE FORWARD

In this section we provide responses to the four CFA critical guiding questions, responses that are collectively shaped from archival sources drawn from the time period when our initial ADVANCE project was developed and awarded. Study co-authors and A&A interviewees also provided recollections regarding each question.

Question 1: What is Wrong or What is the ‘Diagnosis’ of the Problem? In 2002, one of the co-authors learned of the NSF ADVANCE program and its goals for increasing the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers. Being the only woman in her engineering department, she thought NDSU would be a good candidate for receiving such a grant. Her dean agreed, and a cohort of men and women faculty from across campus were invited to gather to begin talking about gender+ issues on our campus. At the time, institutional demographics showed a strong majority of men faculty, and collectively framed the problem as the shortage of women faculty in STEM. An initial proposal was not funded, but we continued to meet and gather institutional demographics as well as data from faculty who had left NDSU for other jobs. Unsurprisingly, we found that faculty who left were less satisfied than current faculty with climate, culture, and collegiality. Women faculty were significantly more likely than men faculty to identify this “chilly climate” as a primary reason for leaving (Burnett, Bilen-Green, McGeorge, & Anicha, 2012), thus broadening the problem diagnosis beyond numbers of women.

The shortage of women faculty was further punctuated with an article in early November 2007 from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Wilson, 2007) that placed NDSU near the bottom of a list of institutions with a low percentage of women faculty in STEM. The cohort submitted another ADVANCE grant proposal that was awarded in 2008. Campus presentations about the

gender+ representation in faculty and leadership roles now included news that the NSF ADVANCE FORWARD grant had begun. The Advocates we interviewed recalled that, as they were forming, a long history of an institution-wide lack of gender+ parity and/or equity was identified as the main problem. Indeed, the lack of women faculty and women's representation in leadership positions on campuses across the U.S. was framed as a notable problem, and "Why so few?" was a common refrain (c.f., Bystydzienski, 2009; Hill et al., 2010). Thus, we summarize the frame for our collective response to the first question as *Representation of Women*.

Question 2: Who is Responsible for the Problem or What is Attributed as the Cause of the Problem? One author recalls a conversation with a male faculty colleague who, after seeing the Chronicle article (Wilson, 2007), looked at her and stated, "The men will need to be involved," intimating that men's overrepresentation clearly framed men as contributors to the problem of gender+ inequity. As reflected in the second grant proposal, we recognized that even though we found underrepresentation of women in both STEM and non-STEM fields, with the obvious corollary of an overrepresentation of men, gender+ inequity needed to be tackled from multiple angles, with men's involvement being necessary though not sufficient. Indeed, as an attrition study revealed (Burnett, Bilen-Green, McGeorge, & Anicha, 2012), climate issues were more prominent in non-STEM compared to STEM units at our university, so campus climate issues across the university needed to be addressed.

Advocate interviewees identified the cause(s) of gender+ inequities variously, though each response reflected aspects of men's roles as arbiters of institutional praxis. One recalled hearing warning stories regarding a one-time woman provost; he commented, "It seemed that because men had historically been in control and were responsible for the terrible gender imbalance, they experienced an erosion of their power and that felt threatening to their 'old boy's

network.” Other responses indicated that gender+ inequities were due to men occupying a majority of faculty and leadership roles and the unconscious bias/patriarchal thinking that produced university policies that were primarily developed by men. Men faculty who did not fully understand their own privileged positions but rather sought to “help” women were also attributed as causal. Initially, the pool of candidates for Advocates was small, and one Advocate noted that a majority of the original Advocates cohort were spouses/partners of the ADVANCE FORWARD project team.

The ADVANCE FORWARD project team also understood that not only was the meager representation of women problematic, but that policies and practices grounded in beliefs that men are intellectual superiors to women were contributing to a clearly “gendered organization” (Acker, 2012). Even where policies existed, such as presidential exceptions to hiring only in extreme emergencies, they were not necessarily followed. Perhaps notably, NDSU has yet to have a woman president. Thus, the problem attribution was framed as institutional: the perpetuation of policy and practices that iteratively privileged men, exacerbated by the overrepresentation of men. The frame in sum: *Institutions Create (In)Equity*.

Question 3: What is the ‘Prognosis’ or Likely Outcome and What is the Solution or What Should be Done to Address the Problem? Our analysis of the previously-mentioned framed problems—a dearth of women faculty that was being perpetually sustained through an institutional praxis of deference to men—called for multiple modes of interference. Intervening on any meaningful scale would require more than a simple increased representation of women. Not only would new policies and accountability structures need to be created, men faculty would need to be involved. Whether it was due to sheer overrepresentation or to men’s socialization to accept unearned over-advantaging, it was also necessary that men faculty accept their

responsibility to become engaged in working for gender+ equity. We summarize this frame as: *Men as Allies*.

Question 4: What is the Call for Action and Who Should Do Something? As noted in responses above, we had determined that the actions needed to address the low representation of women included both institutional policy work and individual intrapersonal (re)education for men faculty. In both cases, who should do that work included the collective; that is, women and men would need to work together. Although an array of direct solutions was enacted (e.g., re-granting award funds directly to women faculty for research projects), the project team, composed of academic women and men, also devised longer-range remedies. To address policy change, the Commission on the Status of Women Faculty (CSWF) was established as a committee connected to the faculty senate. Faculty search and evaluation committee gender+ equity trainings, co-facilitated by women and men teams, were offered regularly. To tackle men's roles and responsibilities in our gender+ equity efforts, the A&A program was created. Although the model has been detailed in a number of publications, we describe it at some length here in order to highlight key aspects and lay some groundwork for our next level of analysis.

A&A was modeled after training created for over-advantaged identity groups who need to learn about the experiences of underrepresented groups, including white anti-racism workshops and Safezone LGBTQ ally training. Several project team members had participated in those trainings and had experienced the transformative possibilities of forming alliances for social justice. Alliances by definition provide mutual benefit, and each group brings important resources to the effort. In the case of alliances for gender+ equity at our campus, women faculty would bring lived experience of gender inequity+ and input regarding (in)effective remedies; men faculty would use the power of their positions and positionality.

To begin, the Advocates needed to prepare themselves to teach their peers (Allies) while keeping in mind a central tenet of an alliance: accountability to the group with whom the alliance is formed. In this case, women faculty engaged with Advocates as consultants, and the ADVANCE FORWARD project team served as a review board. We realized that interrupting gender+ bias in an academic setting would be similar though also importantly different from gender+ equity work in other settings (Berkowitz, 1994, 2002; Greubel, 2012; Meyerson & Tompkins, 2007); the Advocates tailored their Allies workshops to tackle the unique manifestations in academia (Anicha, Burnett, & Bilen-Green, 2015). To inaugurate the Advocates' education, a member of the University of Michigan Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) committee visited campus and presented on gendered power and privilege.

The Advocates read and discussed academic books and peer-reviewed studies about gender+ inequities, then created Ally workshop training curricula designed to synthesize their learning. Notably, theoretical content and terminology were intentionally limited in order to dedicate training time to sharing fundamental knowledge and research findings, and to focus on skill building. Course material focused on the specific impacts of gender+ bias in academia and strategies for interrupting those impacts. Materials included a series of statements for recognizing male privilege patterned on McIntosh's "knapsack" analogy (1990) such as, "Knowing that you can go to a meeting with an administrator and be fairly confident that you will meet with someone of your same gender," and "Never having to be the first male faculty member or department chair in your department." The Advocates also created a pledge for Allies to sign, essentially a commitment to promoting gender+ equity on campus.

Although the intended audience was STEM men, the A&A model addressed the need for broader engagement from men overall and called for “nuts and bolts” action. Explicitly discussed ally behaviors tailored to academic workplace contexts included: the need for search training that incorporated unconscious bias awareness, recognition of and remediation in implicit bias in letters of recommendation, and being purposeful in nominating women for awards on campus. The model also called for ongoing professional development among Advocates through continuing to meet and update their knowledge base and to integrate that new data into Ally workshop materials, then offering Ally training sessions several times each year. We summarize this fourth frame as: *All Hands On Deck*.

Phase 2: CFA, Circa 2021; What Did We Get Right? What is Left Undone?

We now answer the same four critical guiding questions with respect to where we are today as a means to assess the current state of gender+ (in)equities on our campus. We also seek to understand: Have/how have our perspectives and beliefs regarding institutional transformation changed, fourteen years later? Has our campus been impacted by our efforts?

Question 1: What is Wrong or What is the ‘Diagnosis’ of the Problem? Our previous responses identified Representation of Women as a central factor inhibiting gender+ equity on our campus. Has the promise of representational parity and a more gender+ equitable workplace been realized? We have seen positive change: representation of STEM and non-STEM women has increased significantly, and women are increasingly being promoted in faculty ranks. Nonetheless, our current assessment of the gender+ (in)equity problem at our institution is familiar: there are still too few women faculty and administrators overall, including too few women who identify as disabled and/or as BIPOC and our campus climate is (still) too chilly.

At our concluding ADVANCE FORWARD external advisory board meeting in 2016, one upper administrator remarked that the job was done, and that the grant was a success. As ADVANCE FORWARD has blended with institutional structures and become less visible than during the active grant period, this mindset has become more common, yet NDSU remains a gendered organization. For example, many women faculty who engaged in leadership training and who took campus leadership positions left NDSU for more advanced positions. In fact, the sudden departure of upper-level women administrators has raised concerns about issues that may yet need to be addressed (see, for example, Springer, 2018a; Springer, 2018b). Additionally, policies that were created with the leadership of Advocates, such as requiring searches for all full-time positions, have been circumvented with exceptions (usually reserved for emergency situations).

Despite ongoing challenges, especially in STEM departments, our institution made a good deal of progress during the award period. For example, from 2002-2015, the percentage of women full professors at NDSU increased from 5% to 15% (Anicha et al, 2017). Since the ADVANCE IT award in 2008, the overall representation of tenure-line women faculty increased from 26% to 34% (16% to 24% in STEM). Most significantly, the percentage of women full professors increased from 7% to 23% in all fields. All academic units, including STEM departments, have at least one woman faculty member. Several STEM departments are among those with the highest percentage of women faculty nationally. Further, STEM women chairs have increased from 1 to 4 (3 to 15 in all fields); deans from 1 to 3; and provost, vice provosts, and vice presidents from 2 to 4 (22% to 67%). Even so, we continue to see under-representation of women, especially women who identify as disabled and/or as BIPOC, and the Representation of Women frame still fits too well.

Question 2: Who is Responsible for the Problem or What is Attributed as the Cause of the

Problem? While the infusion of substantial resources brought through the NSF ADVANCE award created palpable shifts in campus discourses, including the expectation that institutional structures could indeed support gender+ equity, we also take note of some back-sliding, framed again as institutional (in)equity. Some positive change was garnered because one of our PI's was the Provost, and he along with two men STEM deans were active from the outset in trainings, presentations, and encouraging men in their colleges to attend A&A training. Non-STEM deans also worked hard to promote ADVANCE FORWARD programming. One of our PI's became a Vice Provost who focuses on faculty affairs and institutional equity, thereby allowing her to incorporate ADVANCE FORWARD initiatives into institutional practice. The CSWF continues to revise inequitable policies and create new ones that strive for gender+ equity on campus. ADVANCE FORWARD still maintains a known name and designated space at the university. Thus, while policy change is crucial, we see that accountability structures for implementing policy changes are also essential.

Given an emphasis on the economic bottom line and associated definitions of efficiencies (Cullen et al., 2019; Zippel & Ferree, 2017), equity initiatives tend to fall by the wayside, as they are not often integrated into the business model of education (Cullen et al., 2019; Zippel & Ferree, 2017). The attention to efficiencies might, in part, explain why some consider the ADVANCE FORWARD effort "done," why women leaders have been dismissed without consideration of gender+ equity implications, why gender+ equity policies are ignored, and why data, some qualitative in nature, are brushed off. Without the ADVANCE momentum and funding, change seems to look like two steps forward, one step back. There are new administrators and new faculty. In addition, faculty involvement in many service arenas has

declined in the context of the past year+ of the COVID pandemic. Some faculty have cited a need to prioritize racial disparities more directly as a reason for loss of momentum for gender+ equity work, suggesting that gender+ and race are not well-understood as intersecting social identities.

We also need to reckon with key changes in cultural discourses over the last fourteen years. We have experienced unveiled and heightened racism, sexism, and incivility in recent years (Burnett & Meister, 2019). Although some social sectors have seen profound shifts in definitions of gender+ and increased attention to intersectional identities, it is clear that those interpretations are yet to be fully embraced in the broader culture. We see push-back on LGBTQ rights in the halls of Congress and local legislatures (Avery, 2021; Duster, 2021; Gais, 2012), targeted misinformation campaigns that confound public trust (Sharot, 2021), and the conflation of principled resistance to hate messages with a “cancel culture” (Kurtzleben, 2021). Again, our current response frame to Verloo’s second guiding question continues to reflect the previous frame: Institutions Create (In)Equity.

Question 3: What is the ‘Prognosis’ or Likely Outcome and What is the Solution or What Should be Done to Address the Problem? AND

Question 4: What is the Call for Action and Who Should Do Something? Responses to critical guiding questions 1 and 2 reflect our ongoing status as a gendered institution. In this section we fold together responses to critical guiding questions 3 and 4 in order to consider how to best address the current problem of gender+ (in)equities. As we take into account the shifting discourses around gender+ and other identity markers we see that our collective efforts must more directly respond to the complex and intersecting realities of gender+. Although we claim a number of successes from the multi-pronged effort brought about through the ADVANCE

FORWARD grant and have confidence in the aspects of FORWARD that have become part of our institutional fiber, we also see ongoing need to build accountability structures into our institutional praxis.

As a signature program arising from our ADVANCE initiative, the A&A ‘solution’ continues to show substantial promise. Data strongly suggest that A&A workshop attendees learn new knowledge about how gender+ inequities manifest in academia, gain usable strategies for gender+ equity efforts in their workplaces, and are personally more motivated than prior to the training to make changes to improve gender+ equity in their institutions (Anicha et al., 2020). Although previous efforts to broaden Allies workshops to include both women and men have had mixed responses, it is also understood that most/all of us are not exempt from operating out of implicit gender+ biases, no matter how we identify (e.g., cisgendered, gender-nonconforming, etc.).

Advocate interviewees concurred that the vision of one or more Allies in every unit or department has yet to be realized; one Advocate saw the A&A approach as an abject failure and asserted that men ought to “get out” of FORWARD’s gender+ equity work. Even so, the consensus of Advocate responses spoke of the need for their own ongoing learning and action and affirmed that a deepened analysis of gender+ and intersectionality must be cultivated and integrated into A&A training materials. Recognition of this was reflected in the comment that, “[I]t is important to talk not just about women’s intersectional experiences but also about men’s experiences of intersectionality – the multiplicity of visible and non-visible identities men experience.”

Advocates also indicated intentions for renewed focus on broadening their outreach and recruitment, being responsive to gender+ inequity issues that come up on campus, continuing to

work collaboratively with women's leadership groups, and perhaps developing an 'expert' level of Allies through additional trainings. One Advocate stated, "I now think in terms of 'Advocating' rather than as 'an Advocate' ...we are all part of an imperfect male-preference biased system." Essentially then, today's solutions continue to address the underrepresentation of STEM and non-STEM women via institutional praxes and through inviting people who identify as men to leverage their unearned over-advantaging in service to gender+ equity. In sum, our current responses continue to reflect the previous framing: Men as Allies and All Hands On Deck.

A Fifth Frame. Taken as a whole, this analysis of present-day contexts calls for one more discursive shift essential to effective gender+ justice work, a frame we summarize as Intersectional Gender+. If equity work is to be effective, efforts must meaningfully acknowledge the multiple social identities that inhere in each of us while simultaneously grappling with the challenges of recognizing and naming "gender as multiplicity rather than dichotomy" (Fiani & Han, 2018, p. 18). This fifth frame imbues and broadens the call for action—to *not* give up, keep deepening the analyses, and include more people in gender+ equity efforts, recognizing that 21st century NDSU ADVANCE will look different than its predecessor.

Phase 3: Implications of Our CFA for Next Steps

A critical frame analysis of our institution's initial/2008 responses to our gender+ (in)equity problem, its causes and solutions, and calls for action yielded four summative frames: Representation of Women, Institutions Create (In)equities, Men as Allies, and All Hands On Deck. Another round of CFA examining present day perspectives confirmed that these frames continue to be salient, and further highlighted shifts in cultural discourses over the intervening years, revealing a fifth frame that warrants inclusion: Intersectional Gender+. In this final section

of the paper, we consider implications of those contemporary discourses and compare our frames to a typology of oppositional knowledge (Coy et al., 2008) to appraise their potential effectiveness and provide recommendations for the future gender+ equity efforts.

Typology of Effective Oppositional Discourse Frames

The typology developed by Coy and colleagues (2008) identified four overarching frames for constructing cultural discourses that effectively mobilize individuals and organizations toward social justice. Briefly, they found that providing Counter-Informative claims to reveal “untold stories” and Critical-Interpretive analyses to describe actual impacts were effective means for creating broadened understandings. They further found that moving from understanding to action may best be accomplished through sharing Radical-Envisioning of desired outcomes and describing Transformative processes for achieving those alternative visions. Next, we use this typology of mobilizing discourse frames to benchmark the findings detailed thus far.

Our first frame, Representation of Women, is an example of Counter-Informative claims blended with Critical-Interpretive analysis (Coy et al., 2008). As our narrative suggests, our 2008 grant proposal partially rested on the premise that a central problem was that men faculty outnumbered women faculty. A gender+ parity discourse was also reflected in the article (Wilson, 2007) in which NDSU was held up as emblematic of gender+ inequity due in large part to the paucity of women on campus. This initial framing was “easy” in the sense that the numbers could be tallied. Negative national exposure pressed the institution to acknowledge the problem and respond in an affirmative manner.

Our analysis also included a campus workplace dimension focused on policies and practices. This second frame, Institutions Create (In)Equities, similarly reflected both the

Counter-Informative and Critical Interpretive narratives (Coy et al., 2008) which likely helped us to rally institutional support for the proposal and its implementation (Zippel & Ferree, 2017). Additionally, this frame reflects both Radical-Envisioning and Transformative narratives (Coy et al., 2008) by signaling the possibilities for institutional praxis to serve not only inequity but also to envision and produce equitable outcomes through transformative organizational policies and practices. As mentioned above, to receive grant funding, institutional support was critical, and we received that support in several ways.

We also offered new solutions in our ADVANCE initiative. Our third frame, Men as Allies, offered a synergistic approach that incorporated a Radical-Envisioning narrative (Coy et al., 2008). This positive re-framing of men as central to the production of gender+ equity (versus men as the problem to be solved) allowed us to engage men faculty more fully, who made substantive contributions to overall ADVANCE FORWARD efforts, and who continue to make an impact in creating more A&A programs throughout the U.S. In fact, the A&A program is known as the luminary outcome of our ADVANCE FORWARD endeavor (Anicha, Burnett, & Bilen-Green, 2015). The fourth frame, All Hands On Deck, suggested that contributions from all stakeholders were both needed and valued, reflecting Coy and colleagues' (2008) Transformative processes narrative.

We see our fifth frame, Intersectional Gender+, as a framing that encompasses and extends each element of Coy and colleague's (2008) typology. Acknowledging gender+ as non-binary and identity as intersectional/never-a-monolith are counter-informative and critical-interpretive discursive moves. Radical envisioning of the Intersectional Gender+ equitable results we long for can de-center the perspectives of those who have accrued unearned advantaging. This creates space for new voices and perspectives to emerge and articulate novel

solutions. Finally, an Intersectional Gender+ frame essentially requires the development of transformative processes for achieving equity.

We find that our first four frames, identified through analysis of archival records, do align with a typology of effective social justice discourses (Coy et al., 2008). This finding suggests the likelihood that some of the change our university has seen over the past decades can be attributed to our ADVANCE-supported efforts. Moreover, we anticipate that renewed efforts informed by these analytic frames and buoyed by an Intersectional Gender+ framing offer well-grounded promise for further institutional transformation.

A one-sentence summary of our five discursive frames might read: Because Intersectional Gender+ inequities are created through institutional praxis exacerbated by the over-representation of men, men must cultivate alliances with women to provide avenues for gender+ equity work across institutional levels. We are compelled to add one vital caveat: This framing must not (re)center men's concerns nor identify men as solely accountable for gender+ justice; rather, this frame highlights the potential for men to undo their own unearned *gendered* advantaging.

Overall, our findings indicate that a structured review of past efforts in light of current perspectives can be a worthwhile exercise. The use of sensitizing/guiding questions is a policymaker's staple, and the integration of a critical lens widens the scope, allowing for more inclusive insights to be developed. Critical guiding questions applied in this study provided a structure within which we could take stock of our ongoing efforts to solve the problem of gender+ inequity on our campus. We now lay claim to what works by providing recommendations drawn from our findings.

Recommendations

Contemporary oppositional discourses invite us to see gender+ as multidimensional; broadly and authentically inclusive gender+ equity *requires* that we push back on a gender-as-binary master narrative. Yet, in one crucial sense, the gender-binary continues to be salient: people identified as women continue to experience unearned disadvantaging and people identified as men continue to experience unearned overadvantaging. We acknowledge these competing frames as the ground from which we offer the following three recommendations for pursuing gender+ equity efforts in academia.

Provide Opportunities for Men to Caucus

From our experience, and based on similar ally groups, when individuals who identify as men are together, they tend to be more reflective and candid (Anicha, Burnett, Bilen-Green, 2017; Berkowitz, 1994, 2002). However, on several occasions, women faculty have expressed curiosity about A&A training, and it may be valuable to provide training for individuals who identify as women. In fact, research shows that some women in academia are relationally aggressive with other women (Allen & Flood, 2017-2018). One university that currently includes all genders in A&A training is reporting success (Yacobucci et al., 2020). Given that implicit gender+ bias is present in most of us, it follows that we are all collectively responsible and that mixed-gender+ as well as women-only training on recognizing and interrupting gender+ bias is warranted. Yet, if one objective is to grow the number of individuals who identify as men to become more engaged in gender+ equity, it is important to continue offering men-only training.

Focus on Impact and Actions

To date, A&A workshop content has focused on factually describing the manifestations and impacts of gender+ inequities for women in academia, then offering action-focused steps relevant to academic workplaces. Years of A&A workshop evaluations indicate that this model of gender+ equity training may be particularly relevant in STEM departments where men faculty are in the majority. This pragmatic approach may also be key to gaining campus-wide engagement. As described earlier, a central tenet of the A&A model is the continuing engagement of a cohort of men Advocates meeting to review current scholarship and update Allies workshop content. Advocates note that integrating intersectional theory and implications has been an ongoing challenge.

An Advocate interviewee in our study commented that, “intersectionality is better understood and recognized,” then, reflecting on the fact that men’s experiences are no more monolithic than women’s, he further noted that it “seems that often it is men who have experienced the intersections of multiple identities [who] are the men who stay involved.” Here, we offer an important caveat: an Intersectional Gender+ frame may be rife with theories and terminology with which many STEM (and to a lesser extent, non-STEM) faculty may not be familiar. Additionally, we live in a world in which a manufactured fear of ‘privilege studies’ such as critical race theory (McGirt, 2021) is used to amplify political division. Moreover, much of currently available research literatures rely on a gender-binary in methodology and analyses. Thus, the challenge of updating A&A training goes beyond theoretical content and jargon, to politicization and disdain by some of the population, to the ways in which intersectionality is not meaningfully reflected in the literature. This is where the hard work lies: developing training

content that concisely translates essential intersectional theory and smoothly integrates those insights into training focused on impacts and actions.

Recruit Faculty *and* Administrators

Our ADVANCE FORWARD experience suggests that involving more upper administrators who have a passion for gender+ equity ought to be pursued enthusiastically. A range of group compositions (mixed-gender+ and single gender+-identified), inclusive of administrators, may be most productive. Again, training built to minimize theoretical content while providing a balance of factual impact data with actionable skill development is likely to be most effective.

Conclusions

We have asserted that it is necessary to uncover and speak to the deeper messages, or frames, within cultural discourse to influence cultural change. Through this CFA we identified four frames used in messaging our gender+ equity work to date, efforts that have prompted meaningful change on our campus. This analysis has also surfaced a fifth frame we have labeled Intersectional Gender+. These five frames sharpen our understanding of the work at hand and compare favorably with a typology of discourses with demonstrated effectiveness in shifting public understanding and thus public policy (Coy et al., 2008). This deepened understanding provides the foundation needed to speak to the core underlying beliefs that create and uphold the systems within which we all reside—and thus to influence individuals and institutional systems to operate in more equitable ways. Now is the time to pause and refocus, take what we have learned thus far, and reconfigure our gender+ equity approaches to guide us more effectively to our desired gender+ justice future. It is not the time to throw our hands in the air and give up. The ideal of justice and the good life for us all must be an ongoing endeavor.

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