To Disclose or Not to Disclose: The Ironic Effects of the Disclosure of Personal Information about Ethnically Distinct Newcomers to a Team

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ABSTRACT

Recently, scholars have argued that disclosure of personal information is an effective mechanism for building high-quality relationships. However, personal information can focus attention on differences in demographically diverse teams. In an experiment using 37 undergraduate teams, we examine how sharing personal information by ethnically similar and ethnically distinct newcomers to a team affects team perceptions, performance, and behavior. Our findings indicate that the disclosure of personal information by ethnically distinct newcomers improves team performance. However, the positive impact on team performance comes at a cost to the newcomers, who are perceived as less competent by others and experience heightened social discomfort in team interactions. Ironically, what benefits the ethnically diverse team may undermine its ethnically distinct members. This study highlights how the management of diversity may sometimes require making tradeoffs between individual interests and those of the team.

Key Words: Teams**,** diversity, newcomer, ethnicity, intervention, social dilemma, public good.

INTRODUCTION

Various scholars and philosophers have highlighted the tension between the rights of individuals versus the good of the group. From protecting the environment (Cesar, 2012) to the digitization of health care information (Angst, 2010), society continues to struggle with balancing the interests of the few with those of the many. Hardin's (1968) tragedy of the commons illustrates this tension between optimizing individual interests versus those of the collective (e.g., De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2002; De Cremer et al., 2008). Recently, scholars have framed workforce diversity as a form of the tragedy of the commons, arguing that diversity is a public good that can benefit organizations and society, but is nevertheless not something we can rely on organizations to supply voluntarily (Jonsen, Tatli, Ozbilgin, & Bell, 2013).

While these tensions have been examined theoretically (e.g., van Dijk, Van Engen, Paauwe, 2012), little empirical work has examined the individual versus collective tradeoffs associated with diversity. The current paper examines such a trade-off involving ethnic diversity. Ethnic diversity at the team level is an important research area because organizations are increasingly relying on multinational and multicultural teams to solve complex problems, spur innovation, and coordinate activities on a global stage. The synergy of diverse skills, experiences, and backgrounds may provide strategic advantages for multi-cultural teams (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Shapiro, Furst, Spreitzer, & Von Glinow, 2002). However, such diverse teams also face unique challenges in coordinating work, making decisions, and resolving conflict (Behfar, Kern, & Brett, 2006). Research indicates that multicultural teams can suffer from ethnocentrism (Cramton & Hinds, 2005), in-group biases (Salk & Brannen, 2000), and heightened task or emotional conflict (Elron, 1997; Von Glinow, Shapiro, & Brett, 2004), which can derail team processes and prevent team members from sharing information required for

coordination and problem solving. Given these obstacles and the limited research in this area, there is a need for more research on how to optimally leverage the human capital in ethnically diverse teams.

Following Chatman's (2010) argument that "intentional interventions" are an underdeveloped instrument for improving performance within diverse teams, we have explored the consequences, both positive and negative, of a specific intervention aimed to mitigate the early negative consequences of diversity in teams. Intentional interventions can be important managerial tools because desirable group norms and behaviors may not emerge naturally. Moreover, once effective interventions are identified, they can be codified and spread across organizations as best practices.

We tested an intervention that focuses on the early stages of team processes and involves building trust among teammates— an essential ingredient to team functioning, by sharing personal information (e.g., Brickson & Brewer, 2001; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Investigating the introduction of new members to a team may provide particularly valuable insights into the challenge of managing multinational groups, because in these settings, socialization may have to happen more rapidly (Murphy, 1989), with initial expectations forming quickly and impacting performance thereafter (Chen, 2005; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). The focus on new members also fits the fluid and temporary nature of some multinational teams that bring together individual workers for a specific purpose and time, to be dissolved upon completion of the team's task, or that bring in additional workers when special expertise is needed for project-based work (Feldman, 2002).

Our study examines how disclosure of personal information about a newcomer affects team processes, team performance and perceptions of the newcomer. We suggest that sharing

personal information may help group members with similarities to develop trust, but it may not have the same effect in teams with demographically different members, where disclosures of personal information may only serve to highlight differences among team members and increase their discomfort (Phillips, Rothbard & Dumas, 2009). This is because the disclosure of personal information by individuals with distinct characteristics can accentuate differences and status distance (e.g., the degree of status difference between individuals; Blau, 1977), thereby undermining the formation of high-quality relationships.

At the same time, highlighting differences may also have some positive effects on team performance by increasing team members' motivation to contribute. For example, highlighting differences may increase a distinct member's motivation to win the team's acceptance by sharing unique information (Thomas-Hunt, Ogden & Neale, 2003). Furthermore, accentuating differences through disclosure of personal information may make team members more aware of others' distinctive contributions. In one study, groups with similar surface-level characteristics were less likely to perceive their information as unique than groups with diverse surface-level characteristics (Phillips, Northcraft & Neale, 2006). Highlighting differences may thus encourage the motivation to share, recognize and process unique information, leading to stronger group performance.

In line with Phillips, Rothbard and Dumas (2009) then, our work aims to draw scholar's attention to the potentially ironic outcomes of the disclosure of personal information. We propose that such an intervention may simultaneously improve team outcomes (e.g., performance) and derail group members' individual experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diversity in the workplace raises some ethical issues. Scholars of business ethics have investigated how to manage the tensions associated with diversity and how to promote effective communication among diverse members of a group. Some have argued that managers should adopt a virtue ethics perspective, rather than choosing between a deontological perspective that focuses on equality, or a utilitarian perspective that prioritizes outcomes (van Dijk, van Engen, Paauwe, 2012). These scholars posit that a focus on virtues can bridge the tension between these competing approaches by simultaneously increasing equality and organizational performance. Other scholars suggest that cultural diversity should be managed through conversation and debate, acknowledging that everyone has only some aspect of truth (das Neves & Mele, 2013). This conversational approach to managing diversity is consistent with the work of Trittin and Schoeneborn (2015) who argue that diversity should be reconsidered as a plurality of voices that find expression in organizational settings. While these theories provide useful frameworks for considering the management of diversity, their application will benefit from a better understanding of the psychological dynamics of diversity and its downstream consequences.

Early work on demographic diversity argued that gender and racial diversity improve organizational performance (Erhardt, Werbel, & Schrader, 2003; Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991). Later work, however, disputed the *value-in-diversity* hypothesis, showing that demographic differences are often associated with negative outcomes for workers, teams, and organizations (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Griffith, Mannix, & Neale, 2003; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). These negative outcomes were partly attributed to the

difficulties that demographically diverse teams face in achieving interpersonal closeness. Researchers also noticed that demographic differences could create cognitive uncertainty for demographic minorities and divert attention and energy from task contribution to self-monitoring (Dumas, Rothbard, & Phillips, 2008).

Much of the work on team diversity has focused on diversity factors such as race/ethnicity or gender, and less attention has been paid to national culture as a diversity marker, despite its relevance in the global economy. The sparser literature on national diversity does not lend itself to straightforward conclusions. While a study of 56 global teams found that national diversity decreased performance (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006), other work has found a curvilinear relationship such that teams with very low and very high levels of national diversity outperform teams with moderate levels of national diversity (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Teams with very low and high levels of national diversity were also found to have a higher range of information use but lower levels of information depth and integration (Dahlin, Weingart, & Hinds, 2005).

To account for these complex findings, researchers have been seeking to understand the mechanisms through which diversity impacts individual and organizational outcomes. More nuanced consideration of diversity has led to the recognition of the differential and interactive effects of surface-level (i.e., social category) and deep-level diversity (i.e., attitudes, opinions, information and values) (Harrison & Klein, 2007). For example, work by Van Knippenberg and colleagues suggests that social category diversity leads to stereotyping behaviors in heterogeneous groups, weakening social integration and performance, whereas deep-level diversity leverages differences in knowledge or experience, enhancing group performance (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Nevertheless, a

number of studies have shown that social category diversity can be beneficial for teams in which members have divergent opinions (Phillips & Loyd, 2006; Phillips, Liljenquist, & Neale, 2009; Sawyer, Houlette & Yeagley, 2006).

Despite the lack of a full theoretical integration, this burgeoning literature recognizes the usefulness of deep-level diversity in contributing to innovation and creativity, and also recognizes that social category diversity can be beneficial to team dynamics when its negative ramifications are mitigated through carefully-designed interventions, highlighting the need for designing and testing such interventions (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998; Chatman, 2010).

Hypotheses

Disclosure of personal information is a commonly proposed means to develop and deepen relationships (Allport & Lindzey, 1954; Collins & Miller, 1994; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In the absence of shared experience and information about common values, trust and credibility often form via stereotypical expectations based on others' observable characteristics (Meyerson, Weick, & Kramer, 1996). As a means of overcoming the barriers associated with stereotyping, scholars have proposed the exchange of appropriate, intimate and individuating information (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993), which may alleviate the anxiety and discomfort implicit in intergroup encounters, and promote interpersonal liking (Miller & Bersoff, 1998; Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

Although sharing personal information may be one means of building trust and high-quality relationships, such disclosures may have unintended consequences in diverse settings. Some scholars have questioned whether sharing personal information is in the best interest of a distinct team member (Bettencourt, Charlton, & Kernahan, 1997; Collins & Miller, 1994;

Joardar, 2011). Randel and Jaussi (2003) argued that highlighting personal information can make differences more salient and activate stereotypes. Building off of this insight, Phillips and colleagues (2009) argued that the disclosure of personal information can highlight status differences associated with social group membership and undermine the formation of high-quality relationships. This is because sharing personal information such as hobbies and food preferences can draw attention to membership in low-status groups. As a result, in diverse settings, concealing personal information may be a viable strategy as it minimizes perceived differences, especially when they would be confirming lower status.

Based on this reasoning, we expect that the effect of disclosed personal information on the liking of a newcomer by the team will depend on the newcomer's ethnic similarity to the team. In particular, we predict a statistical interaction effect such that:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information will have a less positive impact on the liking for an ethnically distinct newcomer than on the liking for an ethnically similar newcomer.

The disclosure of personal information may also impact newcomers' perception of their acceptance by the team. Research indicates that homogeneity can produce warmth and acceptance, whereas diversity can lead to conflict (Flynn, Chatman & Spataro, 2001; Levine & Moreland, 1990) and diminished feelings of acceptance or social integration (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly III, 1992). The disclosure of personal information about ethnically distinct members can emphasize out-group affiliation and status distance (Phillips et al., 2009). In contrast, disclosure of personal information about ethnically similar members can promote feelings of belongingness associated with in-group membership (Shore et al., 2011). As a result, ethnic distinctiveness coupled with information that highlights differences may heighten new members' discomfort and decrease their perceived acceptance by the team. The opposite may be true for ethnically similar

members who may enjoy a greater sense of acceptance by the group as a consequence of highlighting in-group affiliation. Hence, we expect that the effect of personal information disclosure on the newcomer's sense of acceptance by the team will depend on the newcomer's ethnic similarity to the team members. In particular, we predict a statistical interaction effect such that:

> **Hypothesis 2:** Relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information will have a less positive impact on an ethnically distinct newcomer's sense of being accepted by their team than an ethnically similar newcomer's sense of being accepted by their team.

Teams often fail to recognize and integrate the unique contributions of each member (Stasser, 1988). Within heterogeneous teams, the relative participation and contribution of members may be linked with social category membership (Dovidio et al., 1988). Furthermore, the propensity to share or retain unique information can be influenced by the degree of similarity among team members (Thomas-Hunt, Ogden, & Neale, 2003). Members of a similar social group (e.g., ethnicity) tend to share similar information to promote closeness and social ties. Conversely, the sharing of unique information by a socially similar team member can increase discomfort because it may be taken as a threat to the harmony and stability of the social connection (Phillips et al., 2003). As a result, socially similar members of a group tend to share and discuss information held in common.

On the other hand, isolated or dissimilar members may see the most likely path to social acceptance in being instrumental and may seek to obtain social acceptance and bolster their status by conveying the impression of usefulness (Ibarra, 1995). These outsiders are often aware of status differences and are motivated to close the status distance (Phillips et al., 2009). Thus, individuals who are dissimilar to other team members may see sharing unique information as a

mechanism to gain social acceptance and may thus be more likely to voice dissimilar information.

In our study, the disclosure of personal information is expected to make salient the similarity or differences and associated status differences among team members, which would than affect the motivation to share unique information. We thus expect that the effect of personal information disclosure on the sharing of unique information will depend on the newcomer's ethnic similarity to the team. In particular, we predict a statistical interaction effect such that:

> **Hypothesis 3:** Relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information will have a more positive impact on an ethnically distinct newcomer's tendency to share unique information than on an ethnically similar newcomer's tendency to share unique information.

The disclosure of personal information of a newcomer may also affect team performance. In addition to increasing the ethnically dissimilar newcomer's motivation to contribute and share unique information, the disclosure of personal information may increase the attention that team members give to the shared information. Research has demonstrated that surface level diversity (e.g., ethnicity) can signal information differences held within the group and legitimate the expression of unique information by a diverse member (Phillips, Northcraft, & Neale, 2006). When teams are homogenous at the surface level, team members tend to assume that information, beliefs, and values are similar. In contrast, when teams are heterogeneous on the surface level, team members assume that deep-level differences also exist. Thus, the disclosure of personal information can increase the likelihood that team members will pay attention to and discuss unique information, by accentuating surface level diversity. The discovery and discussion of unique information can in turn improve team performance. A meta-analysis found that team performance was positively associated with effective information sharing (Mesmer-

Magnus & DeChurch, 2009). Thomas-Hunt and colleagues (2003) also showed that the degree of emphasis members place on unique information can boost performance.

Based on this reasoning, we expect that the effect of disclosing personal information on team performance will depend on the ethnic similarity of the newcomer to the team members. In particular, we predict a statistical interaction effect such that:

> **Hypothesis 4:** Relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information will have a more positive effect on team performance when the newcomer is ethnically distinct from other team members rather than similar to them.

Additionally, disclosure of personal information may have a differential effect on newcomers' perceived competence depending on their ethnic similarity to the team. Research has demonstrated that judgments about the competence of others constitute a core dimension of social perception (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002). Perceptions of competence include among others the perceived intelligence of individuals and inform the content of stereotypes of out-group members (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008).

For two reasons, we would expect perceptions of competence to jointly depend on whether the newcomer was ethnically similar to other members of the team and whether personal information was disclosed about him or her. First, personal information that is stereotype-consistent might trigger status-based evaluations (Thomas-Hunt, & Phillips, 2011). Research has demonstrated that low status equates to lower perceptions of competence (Fiske et al., 2002). In the case of ethnically distinct individuals, personal information may convey out-group membership and lower status-- generating lower expectations of competence. Moreover, speakers of nonstandard dialects or accents (e.g., Scottish accent in Great Britain) are perceived as lower in status and less competent (Bradac, 1990; Ruscher, 2001). In contrast, the personalization of a newcomer that highlights in-group status (higher status) may elicit positive responses such as higher perceptions of competence (Fiske et al., 2002). In other words, through in-group favoritism, highlighting similarities can increase perceived competence.

Second, having an out-group status may influence the newcomer's degree of confidence--which is closely related to perceived competence (Fiske et al., 2002). Discomfort, when out-group status is highlighted, may undermine individuals' confidence and reduce their ability to convey competence. As a result, the ethnically dissimilar newcomer may be viewed as more tentative, unsure, or uncertain. In contrast, when in-group status is highlighted, ethnically similar newcomers' confidence may increase, positively influencing perceptions of their competence.

Based on this reasoning, we expect that the effect of personal disclosure on newcomers' perceived competence will depend on the newcomers' ethnic similarity to team members. In particular, we predict a statistical interaction effect such that:

> **Hypothesis 5:** Relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information will have a more positive effect on newcomers' perceived competence, if the newcomers are ethnically similar to team members as opposed to ethnically different from them.

We tested these five hypotheses in an experimental study of teams.

METHODS

Participants

The study was run at a large southeastern university with a total of 134 undergraduate students, 40% of which were male. Students were recruited through a participant pool containing names of individuals who had previously expressed a willingness to participate in research studies. In terms of national country of origin, 86% were US-born Caucasians and 14% were non-US born Asians. Country of origin constituted our operational definition of social distinctiveness. Participants came from a wide variety of majors.

In total, there were thirty-seven teams assembled for the sole purpose of completing this study (23 teams of four and 14 teams of three). All teams were composed of same-gender individuals in order to eliminate potential status differences associated with gender that could affect participation in the team discussion (Balkwell & Berger, 1996). After completing the study, participants were paid $11 for their participation and received an extra $2 as a bonus.

Research Design and Procedure

We employed a 2 x 2 factorial design (Newcomer Similarity: ethnically similar vs. ethnically distinct x Newcomer Introduction: disclosure of personal information vs. control).

Newcomer Similarity Manipulation: Prior to the arrival of the additional participant (the newcomer) to the teams, we had 2 or 3 Caucasian individuals work together on a block building exercise. At the completion of this exercise, we informed these individuals that one of their team members was not able to attend the session, and as a substitute for this missing team member we had secured a participant whose team members had not shown up in a parallel study session. In the ethnically similar newcomer condition, the incoming member to the team was ethnically similar to the other team members by virtue of having been born in the U.S. In the ethnically distinct newcomer condition, the incoming member to the team was ethnically distinct by virtue of having been born in Asia.

Newcomer Introduction Manipulation: We manipulated the disclosure of personal information by modifying how the incoming member was introduced to other team members. In the control (no-disclosure of personal information) conditions, the additional team member was introduced in the following manner:

> *Allow me to introduce to you Person C. Since no one in his/her group showed up, and you are missing one group member, he/she will be joining you for the rest of the study. He/she is now joining your team and will be working with you to complete the next exercises. Person C please be seated.*

In the disclosure of personal information conditions, the experimenter introduced the new member by providing personal information about the participant. That information was obtained from participants in a pre-survey administered at the time of registration to the study. The additional team member was introduced in the following manner, with the variable fields filled with information provided in the initial survey:

> *Allow me to introduce to you* [name]*". Since no one in his/her group showed up, and you are missing one group member, he/she will be joining you for the rest of the study. He/she comes from a family of* [number indicating family size]. *His/her favorite color is* [color] *and his/her favorite food is* [food]. *Something unique about him/her is that* [something unique]. [Name], *please be seated.*

The experimenter filled the blanks with actual information provided by participants in the pre-survey and this information often reinforced the social distinctiveness or similarity of the newcomer. For the heterogeneous teams, the newcomer often had an Asian-sounding name, listed stereotypically Asian food as their favorite food (e.g., Chinese food, sushi) and the unique information often highlighted their distinctiveness from their U.S. group members (e.g., Thai scholarship recipient, worked in a Chinese restaurant since age five). For homogeneous teams, these same items were often staples of American culture (e.g., favorite food choices of mac and cheese or cheesecake).

Teams then participated in a strategic decision-making exercise in which they had to turn around an underperforming manufacturing facility (adapted from Human Synergistics; Cook, 1998). The teams were provided with background and financial information on the plant as well as consultant reports. Their task was ranking the importance of ten possible factors contributing to the factory's operating loss.

The task was set up such that three members of the team possessed unique task information that no other team member possessed. When groups had four members, the fourth member received information held in common by all other members of the team. The newcomer was always provided with the second most valuable piece of unique information.

After reading the case individually and ranking the ten possible causes of failure, the group members were given 17 minutes to discuss and decide upon a ranking as a team. All discussions were videotaped. Upon completing the team discussion, the team recorded its rankings. Next, each member was asked to make a final individual ranking that could mirror the team's ranking but did not have to. The entire study took approximately one hour.

Measures

Liking for the Newcomer. To measure liking, we asked each individual to evaluate other members of the team upon completion of the task on a five-point Likert scale ("To what extent do you perceive the individual as likeable?" There is evidence that some short scales might be just as valid as long scales (Burisch, 1984). In cases where constructs are intuitive, clear, and have a reasonable degree of homogeneity, single-item scales may be as reliable as longer scales (Burisch, 1997; Postmes, Haslan, & Jans; 2012). Despite their limitations, single-item measures are common in team studies that take a network approach and ask individuals to

evaluate each member of a group (e.g., Carson, Tesluk & Marrone, 2007; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Here we employ a similar method.

Perceived Competence of the Newcomer. To measure perceived competence, we asked each individual to rate other members of the team on a five- point Likert scale "To what extent do you perceive the individual as intelligent?" and "To what extent do you perceive the individual as competent?" We were interested in how the newcomers were perceived by other team members. We included the intelligence item as part of our measure of competence because, theoretically, intelligence has been conceptualized as a component of competence (Greenspan & Driscoll, 1997; McClelland, 1973). In line with this conceptualization, previous empirical research has used perceived intelligence as a measure perceived competence (e.g., Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). Our own results also showed that the two items were highly correlated ($r = .73$, $p < .0001$), suggesting that they can be considered to tap the same construct. Cronbach's alpha for this two-item composite measure was .84.

The Newcomer's Perception of Acceptance by the Group. Conceptually, people's sense of acceptance is a function of how much they feel valued (Leary, 2001). When people feel valued, they are also more likely to actively participate and seek opportunities to contribute (Roffey, 2017). On this basis, we measured newcomers' perceived acceptance by the team by averaging their responses to two items. On a five-point Likert scale, participants rated the degree to which other team members valued their contribution ("During the group discussion, did you feel that your contributions were valued?"), and the degree to which they felt they could freely express their ideas in the group ("During the group discussion, did you feel that you could freely express your ideas?"). We were interested in newcomers' responses to these items as our hypothesis (H2) concerned newcomers' perception of being accepted by their teams. The two

items correlated highly ($r = .71$, $p < .0001$), further suggesting that they can be considered to capture the same construct. Cronbach's alpha for the composite measure was .83 for the newcomers.

Sharing of Unique Information. Two raters assessed the degree to which individuals shared the unique information they possessed (1 = *members do not share any unique information*, 5 = *members share numbers from their unique information*). To assess each individual's participation and unique information sharing, we had a rater who was blind to the hypotheses rate the videotaped group interactions. Using a subset of videos, we employed a second rater to establish interrater reliability. Raters evaluated the degree to which each member shared their unique information. We used Cohen's Kappa as a measure of agreement between raters, in which we achieved .835. Thus, we were confident in our assessment of the degree to which participants emphasized their unique information.

Team Performance. We measured performance by summing over each item the absolute value of the deviation from the expert ranking. Because we wanted to capture the effectiveness of the team processes in our measure of team performance, we controlled for the average initial individual performance of team members. The reported means are the difference between the group's individual average score and their score after group discussion, with greater scores indicating stronger team performance. This measurement of team performance is consistent with past research (Kim, 1997).

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

To check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we asked each participant to indicate which team member had arrived last. All but one individual identified the correct member. To further check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we asked members to evaluate the accent of the new member of the team on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). We found a significant effect for newcomer nationality on perceptions of an accent, $F(3, 91) = 38.07$, $p < .0001$. The mean for the US newcomer was 1.04 ($SD = 0.19$) compared to the mean for the non-US newcomer which was 3.33 ($SD = 1.5$). Thus, their accent likely contributed to the distinctiveness of the non-US-born Asian newcomers in their teams.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted ANOVAs with Newcomer Introduction (control, disclosure of personal information) and Newcomer Similarity (ethnically distinct non-US-born Asian, ethnically similar US-born Caucasian) as between-subjects variables. Our H1 predicted that relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information would have a less positive impact on team members' liking of an ethnically distinct newcomer than on the liking of an ethnically similar newcomer. Contrary to our prediction, there was no significant interaction effect between Newcomer Introduction and Newcomer Similarity; *p*s > .64. Thus, H1 was not supported. We only found a marginally significant main effect for Newcomer Similarity $F(3, 94) = 2.93$, $p = .090$. The trend was such that other group members reported lower liking for the ethnically distinct newcomer in both the personalized ($M_{non\text{-}US} = 3.50$, $SD = 0.86$) and control conditions ($M_{non\text{-}US} = 3.38$, $SD = 1.06$), compared to the ethnically similar newcomers in both the personalized ($M_{US} = 3.73$, $SD = 0.88$) and control conditions ($M_{US} = 3.79$, $SD = 0.79$).

We found support for H2 (see Figure 1) which predicts that relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information would have a less positive impact on an ethnically distinct newcomers' perceptions of being accepted by their team members than on an ethnically

similar newcomers' perceptions; $F(1, 32) = 4.97$, $p = .033$. This was a cross-over interaction, such that ethnically distinct newcomers felt less accepted by the group when personal information was disclosed about them ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.31$), as opposed to when it was not ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.76$); whereas, ethnically similar newcomers felt more accepted when personal information was disclosed about them ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.32$) as opposed to when it was not ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.78$). In addition to the interaction effect, we also found a main effect of ethnic similarity such that ethnically similar newcomers reported higher levels of acceptance than ethnically distinct newcomers; $F(1, 32) = 4.35$, $p = .045$.

H3 predicted that relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information would have a more positive effect on an ethnically distinct newcomer's propensity to share unique information than an ethnically similar individual's propensity to share unique information. We also found evidence supporting this predicted interaction effect (see Figure 2): $F(1, 33) = 4.71$, $p = .037$. This was a cross-over interaction, such that ethnically distinct newcomers were more likely to share unique information if personal information had been disclosed about them ($M = 2.0$, $SD = 1.85$) as opposed to when it was not ($M = 1.22$, $SD = 0.67$). In contrast, ethnically similar newcomers were less likely to share unique information if personal information had been disclosed about them ($M = 1.00$, $SD = 0.0$) as opposed to when it was not ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.97$).

H4 stated that relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information about newcomers will have a more positive impact on team performance when newcomers are ethnically distinct rather than ethnically similar. Supporting this prediction (see Figure 3), we found a significant interaction effect of Newcomer Introduction and Newcomer Similarity on team performance, controlling for team members' initial performance: $F(1,33) = 4.61$, $p = .039$.

Teams performed better than their individual members when personal information was disclosed about ethnically distinct newcomers (M_{diff} = 5.77, *SD* = 5.87) compared to when it was not (M_{diff} = 2.47, *SD* = 3.37). In contrast, teams' performance above their individual members was lower when personal information was disclosed about an ethnically similar newcomer (M_{diff} = 1.71, *SD* = 3.83) compared to when it was not (M_{diff} = 4.07, *SD* = 5.12).

In H5 we predicted that relative to a control condition, disclosure of personal information would have a negative impact on team members' perception of an ethnically distinct newcomer's competence and a positive impact on an ethnically similar newcomer's competence. In line with this prediction (see Figure 4), we found a significant interaction effect; $F(3, 95) = 4.98$, $p = .028$. Ethnically distinct newcomers were perceived to be less competent when personal information was disclosed about them (*M* = 3.82, *SD* = 0.68) as opposed to when there was no disclosure of personal information (*M* = 4.07, *SD* = 0.79); whereas, ethnically similar newcomers were perceived to be more competent when personal information was disclosed about them (*M* = 4.34, *SD* = 0.61) as opposed to when it was not (*M* = 3.98, *SD* = 0.62). As found by others (Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005), there was a significant correlation between liking for and competence perceptions of the newcomer ($r = .49$, $p < .0001$).

DISCUSSION

Current research highlights the difficulties associated with realizing the potential strategic advantages of multicultural teams (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Shapiro et al., 2002). Some researchers have argued that sharing individuating information can address some of these difficulties by fostering stronger relationships among team members. However, diversity scholars have questioned whether or not this prediction would hold in diverse settings, arguing

that the sharing of personal information can make differences more salient and reinforce stereotypes (Phillips et al., 2009; Randel & Jaussi, 2003). Building on this insight, our research contributes to diversity research in a number of ways. First, it empirically demonstrates that disclosure of personal information has differential consequences for ethnically distinct versus ethnically similar team members. In our study, ethnically dissimilar newcomers were perceived as less competent and felt less accepted than their ethnically similar counterparts when personal information was disclosed about them as opposed to when it was not. The act of sharing personal information in multinational settings may thus facilitate categorization and stereotypical responses, rather than counteract them— at least when the shared information highlights national differences. It may make more salient a distinct social identity that becomes the lens through which individual perceptions and judgment are filtered (Meyerson et al., 1996), consciously or even unconsciously (Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997).

Our study also contributes to motivational theories associated with diversity. Past theories emphasize informational implications of diversity, highlighting that diverse members bring diverse knowledge and information that can improve team functioning (e.g., Hintz, Tindale & Vollrath, 1997; Larson & Christensen, 1993; Tsui & O' Reilly, 1989). Yet, these theories often do not address the reasons why individuals may or may not be motivated to share information that could be important to team performance. Paradoxically, we found that while the disclosure of personal information negatively impacted the experience of the ethnically distinct new member (e.g., less accepted by the team), this was also when they contributed more unique information to the team. The increase in sharing unique information is consistent with theories that posit information sharing to be a mechanism for gaining social acceptance (Ibarra, 1995; Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003). Thus, the perceived social or status distance to the rest of the team

may motivate an ethnically distinct newcomer to strive to close the distance by contributing more. Disclosure of personal information did not have the same effect on ethnically similar newcomers. To the contrary, disclosing personal information about an ethnically similar newcomer tended to decrease the sharing of unique information by that newcomer. This could be because ethnically similar newcomers prefer not to distinguish themselves from similar others within their teams and do not feel a similar need to close a social or status distance by providing evidence of their usefulness (Phillips et al., 2009; Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003). This leads to a cautionary note about the benefits of personal disclosure even in more homogeneous situations. Thus, our research suggests that motivation to decrease social or status distance is one mechanism for increasing individual contributions and realizing the informational benefits of diverse teams. Future work is needed to elucidate the factors that motivate team members to share information, particularly in ways that do not engender discomfort or a sense of being excluded in the members.

Further, our results have important implications for research on diversity and team performance. While many accept the premise that there is value in diversity, research reveals a more complex relationship between diversity and team performance (Kochan et al., 2003; van Dijk, Van Engen, Van Knippenberg, 2012). A body of research suggests that the effects of diversity on performance are contingent on the dimension of diversity assessed (Howitz & Howitz, 2007; Mannix & Neale, 2005). Whereas demographic (e.g., ethnic) diversity is negatively associated with performance, job-related diversity is positively associated with performance. Rejecting this notion, van Dijk and colleagues (2012) have called for more research to consider the moderators that would enable demographic diversity to increase performance. Our paper contributes to this conversation by offering a condition that can improve performance

in demographically diverse contexts. In particular, we found that the disclosure of personal information of an ethnically distinct new member improved team performance, while the disclosure of personal information by an ethnically similar member tended to have the opposite effect. This performance effect could have been a result of the sharing of unique information or lack thereof by the newcomers. Our mediation analysis did not bear this relationship out, possibly because of low statistical power to detect the small effect of sharing unique information by the newcomer, which is only one of the many factors contributing to performance.

Finally, our research contributes to the discussion around ethical considerations in managing diverse teams. Recently, scholars have conceptualized workforce diversity as a form of the tragedy of the commons - arguing that diversity is a public good that can benefit organizations and society (Jonsen, Tatli, Ozbilgin, & Bell, 2013). However, individual tendencies, incentives and short-term benefits may be misaligned with the objective of an inclusive diverse workplace, and may instead undermine the potential benefits of diversity through exclusionary behaviors and practices (e.g., homophily, discrimination). On this basis, some have argued that the general discourse needs to move beyond discussing diversity in the abstract and start to specify the ways in which organizations can leverage diversity for positive effect (Davidson, 2011; O'Leary & Weathington, 2006). Others have offered a communicative approach to managing diversity that encourages the expression of diverse voices (das Neves & Mele, 2013; Trittin & Schoeneborn, 2015). Our findings suggest that when we are aiming to leverage diversity through specific communication practices and frameworks, we need to appreciate how diversity practices can present social dilemmas or tradeoffs between group and individual interests.

On one hand, diversity in teams can be considered a public good. Because an organization has invested in acquiring and developing the skills of diverse team members, it can expect that the specialized skills of the individual will be deployed to benefit the team and the organization (i.e., the notion of human capital). Diversity in membership, then, has the potential of providing uncommon perspectives and insight that individuals with differing cultures, nationalities, and backgrounds bring to a team. A utilitarian perspective prioritizes the interests of the team. In other words, the result of the teams, or "the greatest amount of good for the most people" takes precedence, even when disadvantaging the minority (van Dijk et al., 2012)

However, more often than not, those contributing the diversity are in numerical minority and therefore require special consideration and protections. In these instances, it is important to note that individual information is indivisible from self. According to Mason (1986) "information forms the intellectual capital from which human beings craft their lives and secure dignity" (p. 5). When sharing individual and unique perspectives, people give of themselves and assume a risk that others may reject them or their perspective. In weighing the tradeoffs of diversity in teams, it is important to calculate the benefit of sharing the information against the return of what individual members are giving up (Culnan & Armstrong, 1999). Our findings suggest that a virtue ethics approach (van Dijk et al., 2011) would be appropriate, whereby ethical decisions are made with an appreciation for the context and the tradeoffs that exist. Perhaps, one way to bridge these tensions is to disclose personal information that achieves optimal distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991; Shore et al., 2011). In other words, personal information can be disclosed to achieve both belongingness and uniqueness- increasing the comfort of the ethnically distinct newcomer while maintaining their motivation to contribute unique information. For example when disclosing personal information, individuals might include

interests and activities that are held in common with the larger group and at the same time share experiences that suggest a unique perspective (e.g., education, work experience).

Altogether, our results have some implications for the management of multi-cultural teams. First, making differences salient may be an important mechanism for acknowledging and integrating the unique perspectives of ethnically distinct team members. Rather than homogenizing team membership, which may lead to a greater emphasis on commonly held information, the strategic highlighting of personal information may motivate diverse members to share unique information as a means of gaining acceptance. Our research also demonstrates that carefully tailored interventions can play an important role in team functioning and individual members' experience. These interventions may be particularly critical in demographically diverse settings, where teams may suffer from a myriad of obstacles that impede team functioning. Research has demonstrated that leaders could curate such interventions, helping to prevent communication breakdowns and allowing heterogeneous teams to perform more effectively than, or as well as, homogeneous teams (Ayoko, Hartel, Fisher, & Fujimoto, 2004). Our findings suggest that even interventions that facilitate group performance need to be carefully managed, especially in the early stages of group development, so that they minimize the social cost experienced by those who contribute social distinctiveness at risk of taking a hit to their own experiences and their team members' perceptions of themselves.

LIMITATIONS/FUTURE RESEARCH

While our findings add to our understanding of how disclosing personal information can impact teams with ethnically similar or distinct newcomers, our study has several limitations that need to be recognized. First, our sample is drawn from a population of students, which sets a

limit to generalizability. Second, in our study, the personal information about the newcomer was provided by the experimenter rather than the newcomer herself or himself. Disclosure of personal information may increase liking more when the exchange of information is voluntary, demonstrating a degree of vulnerability and inviting trust (Collins & Miller, 1994). This aspect of our design may explain why our manipulation did not affect liking for the newcomer. Future work should evaluate the spontaneous disclosure of personal information by the individual.

Our focus on the introduction of a new member to an existing team may also limit the applicability of our findings to already existing teams or those in which all members obtain membership simultaneously. Our intervention is appropriate for an intermediary stage of multinational teams, when members begin getting to know one another. A further aspect of the design that limits the generalizability of our findings is that the preformed team was ethnically homogenous. The results could be different if the ethnically distinct team members were introduced to a team in which one or more members shared their nationality, or were from ethnicities other than the majority's. Moreover, our ethnically distinct participants were Asian, and reactions to other ethnicities may be different depending on status distances (Leslie, 2014). Future work should explore how varying status distance and group configuration would influence the disclosure of personal information on team processes and outcomes.

The duration of the team interaction also presents some limitations to what we can learn from our study. Although our work focuses on temporary project-based teams, some teams may have ongoing working relationships over a prolonged period of time. Our results may become less relevant as teams develop their own norms and hybrid identity over time (Earley & Gibson, 2002), pushing past superficial distinctions. Teams are also more likely to share unique information later in team discussions (Larson & Christensen, 1993). Conversely, our findings

suggest that highlighting differences upfront may encourage the sharing of unique information earlier in the team process and improve performance.

CONCLUSION

Diversity in teams can be considered a social dilemma that evokes tensions between collective versus individual interests. Solutions to these tensions must come from leaders who can mitigate these tensions. Indeed, there is a need to "increase the salience of the potential trade-off and consequences because decision makers vary in their understanding of these dynamics" (Jonsen et al., 2013, p. 283). Our research presents a step toward understanding and elaborating one of these trade-offs.

Overall, these results provide practical implications for how multinational teams can manage the integration of diverse members. Ironically, what is good for the ethnically diverse team may not be good for its ethnically diverse members. Our results also suggest that more research is needed on multi-stage or multi-dimensional interventions, that recognize the potential for a 'decoupling' between group-level and individual-level outcomes, seek to find ways to balance the costs and benefits of personal information disclosure, and as a result serve to optimize the effects of diversity both for individual members and for the entire team.

Compliance with Ethical Standards:

Funding: This study was not funded by a grant or any external party.

Ethical Approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Figure 1.

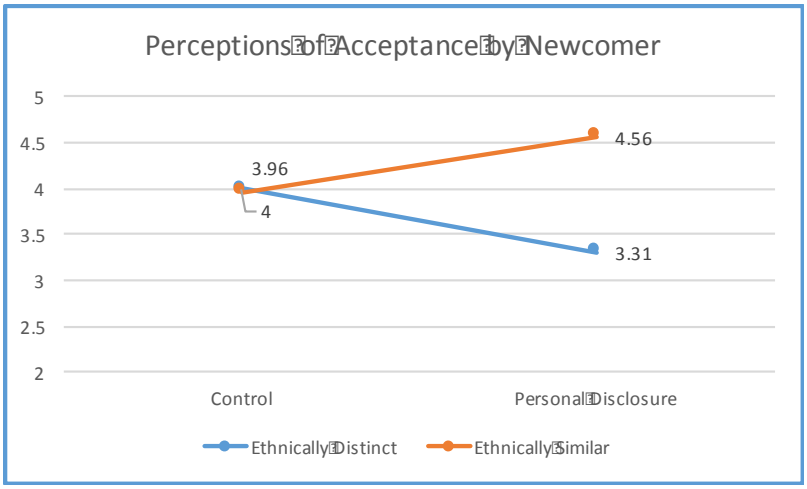

Figure 2.

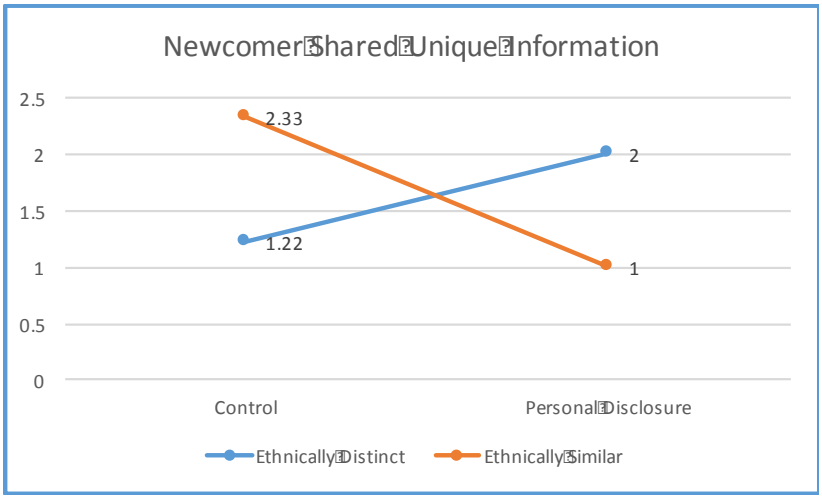

Figure 3.

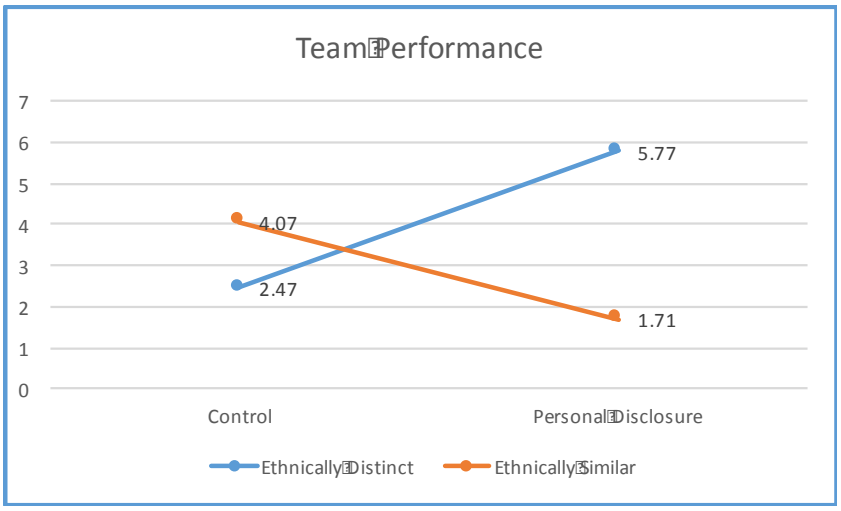

Figure 4.