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DIVERSITY IN A JAPANESE TRANSPLANT: THE EFFECT OF GENDER, RACE, AGE, AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS ON TEAMWORK

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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The Graduate School
University of Kentucky
2007

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By
Elena Darina Lepadatu
Lexington, KY
Chair: Dr. Thomas Janoski, Associate Professor of Sociology
Lexington, KY
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Diversity and Teamwork are currently some of the trendiest human resources strategies of boosting team performance and ultimately, organizational performance. This study analyzes the impact of gender, racial, age and employment status diversity on teamwork, and is one of the first studies on diversity and teamwork in the mature phase of Japanese transplants. The theoretical framework includes elements of the symbolic interactionist theory, Kanter's theory on tokenism, revised contact hypothesis and perspectives on cultural diversity (Ely and Thomas, 2001). The data were collected from interviews with 87 workers from 16 production teams working on the assembly line at a top Japanese auto transplant in US, as well as from observation, analysis of corporate literature and the annual opinion survey.

Furthermore, intermediary variables like team climate or team spirit have been found to mediate the relationships between diversity and team performance. Gender mixed teams reported a more enjoyable and pleasant experience in teams, whereas the male teams exposed more rivalry and competition and the female teams had more interpersonal conflicts. Similarly, the racially diverse teams have more fun and more interesting things to discuss at work, which alleviates the boredom caused by the routine of the assembly-line. Age-balanced teams also have optimal functioning in terms of productivity, quality, safety and problem-solving. Differences in employment status were found to bring inequality and different standards of performance for permanent and temporary workers, which can threaten the fundamental principles of teamwork.

KEYWORDS: Diversity; Teamwork; Japanese Transplants; Degree of diversity; Auto Industry

Darina Lepadatu

April 19th, 2007

DIVERSITY IN A JAPANESE TRANSPLANT: THE EFFECT OF GENDER, AGE, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, RACE AND ETHNICITY ON TEAMWORK

By

Elena - Darina Lepadatu

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As much as I hate clichés, it is very important for me to acknowledge the efforts of some people who changed my life and my career forever. It is incredible how much your life can drastically change over a period of only five years. Five years ago I took a plane from Bucharest to Lexington, KY, not knowing where Lexington is on the map. I was the trailing wife of a Romanian graduate student in Philosophy who got a scholarship at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Thomas Janoski discovered me, rejuvenated my passion for Sociology and transformed me into "PhD material". He is one of those rare mentors who never get tired of their students, who are always there for you, no matter how many times during the day you need them. He is my teaching inspiration and role model, and I hope to never disappoint him.

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Foreword: A Popular Tale on Japanese and American Teamwork

Toyota, a Japanese company and GM, an American company, decided to have a canoe race on the Missouri River. Both teams practiced long and hard to reach their peak performance before the race. On the big day the Japanese won by a mile.

Afterward, the American team became very discouraged and morally depressed. The American management decided the reason for the crushing defeat had to be found. A Management Team made up of senior management was formed to investigate and recommend appropriate action.

Their conclusion was the Japanese had eight people rowing and one person steering, while the American team had eight people steering and one person rowing. So American management hired a consulting company and paid them an incredible amount of money.

After six months of hard work, they advised that too many people were steering the boat, while not enough people were rowing. So the American Team acted: To prevent losing to the Japanese again next year, the rowing team's management structure was totally reorganized to four steering supervisors, three area steering superintendents and 1 assistant superintendent steering manager.

They also implemented a new performance system that would give the one person rowing the boat greater incentive to work harder. It was called the "Rowing Team Quality First Program," with meetings, dinners and free pens for the rower. Even new paddles and medical benefit incentives were promised for a winner. "We must give the rower the empowerment and enrichments through this quality program."

The next year the Japanese won by two miles. Humiliated, the American management laid off the rower for poor performance, halted development of a new canoe, sold the paddles and canceled all capital investments for new equipment.

The money saved was distributed to the senior executives in appreciation for a job well done…

Chapter 1: Introduction: Bringing Diversity to Japanese Transplants

This popular tale was sent to me via e-mail by friends from all over the world. I have collected many versions of it in English, French, German and Romanian. The tale shows that that Japanese teamwork has already become a fable; it belongs now to a global folklore. The following study intends to decipher the secret behind the success of Japanese teams. Toyota, Honda and Nissan are steadily moving toward dethroning the Big Three American companies (Ford, GM and Chrysler) from their privileged positions as top auto makers in the US and the entire world. This projects attempts to show that the secret of success will be in the area of teamwork, especially in bringing diverse groups of workers together to produce high performance. But I will go even deeper to look at how diversity works among employees of diverse gender, age, race, and employment status, which of course make the seemingly simple job of teamwork much more challenging and potentially conflictual. Thus, I will work to uncover the tensions, emotions, challenges, and even joys of a diverse workforce cooperating, laboring, and dealing with highly intense team situations.

The study of social groups has recently been revived in sociology. As Harrington and Fine (2006) pointed out, small groups have become "unique arena where all the action is", meaning that the study of small groups allows sociologists to observe 'simulations' or microcosms of larger social units, in which basic processes can be observed in rich detail. The small group is the cross-roads of self and society, and its systematic study can inform central domains of sociology: cultural, organizational and economic sociology (Harrington & Fine, 2006). Groups can develop their miniature cultures of diversity, which show how the perspectives on diversity can spread out to the whole society.

Importance of the Study

The purpose of this project is to compare the group dynamics and culture of teams with different degrees of diversity and to reveal the conditions and circumstances that lead diverse teams to have a lower or higher performance than the homogenous teams. The project will offer an in-depth analysis of diversity at the team and group level: how

the quality of intra-group relations, feeling valued and respected, and the significance of individual identities impact the group effectiveness. Most of the previous diversity studies revealed how the diversity of opinions, abilities, skills and experience stimulates the process of problem-solving in project teams or top management teams, but I want to find out in which way diversity affects teams' performance in production and more specifically, in which way diversity in terms of age, gender, race and ethnicity affects teams' performance.

Diversity and *Teamwork* are currently some of the trendiest human resources strategies of boosting team performance and ultimately, organizational performance. Corporations spend millions of dollars on diversity training, programs or activities, but the current research is still inconclusive about "how diversity works" in production teams in hard core industries.

This study will be the first in-depth analysis of diversity in the context of high performance work systems in the automobile industry. High performance work systems rely on extensive selection and training, self-managed teams, intensification of work, decentralized decision-making, flexible jobs and open communication (Evans & Davis, 2005; Appelbaum et al., 2000). Diversity should ideally have a tremendous impact on high performance work systems that are obsessed with quality and continuing improvement (Womach et al., 1990), but the contribution of diversity to the performance of lean systems had never been explored before. A number of participation observation studies at NUMMI in Fremont, CA (Adler, 1992), Mazda in Flat Rock, MI (Fucini & Fucini, 1995), Toyota in Georgetown, KY (Besser, 1996), Subaru-Isuzu in Indiana (Graham, 1997), Nissan in Sunderland, England (Garrahan & Stewart, 1992), two electronics transplants in UK (Delbridge, 1998) and a GM- Suzuki joint venture in Ontario, Canada (Rinehart, Huxley & Robertson, 1997) revealed invaluable information for the understanding of modern Japanese transplants, but they approached collaterally the contribution of women and other minorities to the performance of production teams, and ultimately to the overall organizational performance. This project is particularly significant because the system of lean production has never been analyzed from the perspective of diversity, although some previous studies had briefly touched the topic of gender in the car industry (Besser, 1996; Graham, 1997).

Dilemmas of Team Diversity Research

After more than forty years of initiatives and policies promoting diversity at work, the diversity paradigm continues to be a hot but still controversial topic in the field of Organization Studies. Furthermore, the findings of different research studies are contradictory. "Organizational diversity is a slippery construct" (Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003), "diversity is a double-edged sword" (Milliken & Martins, 1996) or there are more sides to the diversity sword (Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003), "dealing with diversity is like opening Pandora's box" (Shapiro, 2000), "much is still unknown about the relationship between diversity and team performance" (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999), "conclusive findings still do not exist", "the relationship is obviously not straightforward and might have been overstated" (Simsarian Webber & Donahue, 2001). The findings of more than 30 studies that I have reviewed on this topic are contradictory: the relationship between team diversity and team performance is either positive or negative in some cases, curvilinear (Harrison et al., 2002; Lau & Murnigham, 1998) and null in most of the cases (Simsarian Webber & Donahue, 2001).

There are six problematic areas in the field of team diversity concerning how the studies are done and in subsequent meta-analyses. The first problem reflects trends in the labor market. The increased access of gender, age, racial and ethnic minorities on the labour market will make completely homogenous workplaces hard to find in the near future. Most workplaces will soon employ (if they didn't do it already!) a large degree of diversity. The question is no longer whether the heterogeneous teams work better than the homogenous teams, but how to deal with various degrees of diversity (low, medium or high levels of diversity) in teams and how to capitalize the potential of diversity.

The second problem related to the diversity research is that organizational diversity and organizational demography are sometimes seen as overlapping areas of research. Tsui and Gutek (1999) made a clear distinction between the two fields, the diversity field being in charge with the experiences of diversity (so it has a predilection for case studies) while the organizational demography focuses on the causes and consequences of group composition. Most of the demographic studies are compositional studies, but the relational demography promises to become a tradition in this field as well

(Tsui et al., 1992; Ely, 1994, 1995; Ibarra, 1995; Bacharach & Bamberger, 2004 etc.). One of the problems of the demography research is that it assumes that all types of demography are equivalent (Tsui & Gutek, 1999; Simsarian Webber & Donahue, 2001)

A third problem concerns the way in which one should balance the advantages and the disadvantages of diversity**.** Although the advantages of diversity are obvious (increased creativity, high quality ideas, suggestions, objectivity etc), there are some downsides to diversity that one has to keep in mind when they deal with teams: increased conflict, less commitment and cohesion, and longer time needed to reach a decision (Simsarian Webber & Donahue, 2001; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Kirkman et al., 2004).

Fourth, the debate becomes even more complicated when we have to take into consideration the aspect of managed versus the unmanaged diversity. Researchers warn that the increase of demographic variation does not in itself lead to an increase in organizational effectiveness. "It is how a company defines diversity and what it does with the experiences of being a diverse organization that delivers the promise of diversity" (Thomas & Ely, 1996). One of the reasons that the findings of previous studies appear so contradictory derives from the fact that team diversity or team performance data are not analysed in the context of managed or unmanaged diversity. The relationship between team diversity and team performance varies from being null in some studies to positive and negative in other studies, but we are not told which teams use and already implement diversity policies or diversity and team training, and which of them do not. None of the previous meta-analysis studies on work teams has tried to address this issue.

Fifth, anyone that attempts to analyse the concept of team diversity has to be aware of the fact that diversity is not a holistic concept. Again, the current findings are contradictory because not all types of diversity impact team performance in the same way. With regard to the types of diversity, there is not a consensus in the literature on team diversity on what are the most important makers of diversity. Are they the most visible attributes, such as gender, age, race (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) or the most invisible attributes or highly-job related attributes, such as education, work experience, knowledge, skills and abilities (Milliken & Martins, 1996)? Secondly, the nature of diversity varies depending on the type of team we are dealing with. It is commonly

assumed that teams in high-skilled jobs or project teams can benefit more from diversity than teams in low-skilled jobs. The assumption implies that teams in low-skilled jobs cannot directly benefit from the traditional advantages of diversity (creativity, free-thinking, objectivity, innovation) and are ravaged by the disadvantages of diversity, such as conflict and low level of commitment and cohesion. The research on diverse teams is abundant on studies on top-management teams to the detriment of work teams. Only recently have researchers increased their examination of diversity's effects in lower-level organizational groups, primarily project teams, but the research on production/ work teams is extremely limited.

Finally, the problems of previous meta-analyses on this issue leads to the dilemma of laboratory versus field findings**.** Most of the studies on team diversity that are optimistic about the beneficial role of ascriptive attributes (gender, age, race, ethnicity etc) on the performance of teams are lab studies. The studies on permanent work groups are less optimistic about the effect of diversity on group outcomes (Pelled, 1996; Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992). Because student teams have a very limited life cycle which does not allow the team members to bond or to even have conflicts, more research on real work teams in real working environments is needed. The following study attempts to address some of these problems by focusing on diversity in production teams on the shop-floor, an area insufficiently explored in the literature on teams.

Theories of Team Diversity

Of the recent meta-analysis studies on this topic (Simsarian Webber & Donahue, 2001; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003; Kirkman et al., 2004), all have concluded that we do not yet have conclusive findings on the impact of diversity in teams because we still do not understand the underlying mechanisms that are in the "black box" of demography (Lawrence, 1997) and do not have many explanatory models that link diversity and performance. Although it claims to be a multidisciplinary area, the literature on teams has a very strong organizational behavioural and managerial orientation.

Reflecting management orientations toward organizational behaviour as a discipline, social identity, social categorization, and cognitive resource theories are most often used to explain how diversity in teams affects performance. More than 80% of the

studies included for this review have a theoretical background based on social identity theory. Social identity and social categorization theories (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1985) are based on three central ideas: categorization (we use social categories, such as African-American, young, old etc., because they are useful in understanding the reality), identification (we identify with groups to which we belong) and comparison (in order to evaluate ourselves we compare ourselves with similar others). The problem of social identity theory is that it explains rather the mechanisms of inter-group discrimination (how one identity group discriminates at the expense of other sub-group), and does not successfully explain the intra-group processes that lead to the performance of diverse teams (Arrow et al., 2000). Other theories less used in the diversity research are similarity-attraction paradigm (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2004), role theory (Carli & Eagly, 1999), social contact theory (Simmel, 1971; Kanter, 1977), relative deprivation and group competition theory (Tolbert et al., 1999).

The area could benefit from theoretical approaches coming from other social sciences, particularly sociology, especially at a time when the popular organizational behaviour theories appear to be no longer helpful in revealing new intermediary mechanisms between team diversity and team performance. My innovative theoretical framework uses elements from the symbolic interactionist theory (Mead, Blumer and Goffman), revised contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), cultural diversity perspectives (Ely & Thomas, 2001) and theories of tokenism (Kanter, 1977). First of all, it makes significant contributions to the advancement of symbolic interactionist theory, who failed to fully engage the concept of difference/ diversity in its analysis of social interactions. Based on Blumer's sense of group position, Mead's concept of generalized other and Hughes' knitting of the social group, this will be the first sociological study in the team diversity research, an area traditionally dominated by organizational behavioural and managerial approaches. This project will further develop and apply the forgotten symbolic interactionist concept of generalized other to analyse how majority workers perceive and understand the contributions of minority workers to the team, as well as minority workers' own perceptions on how they participate to the team effort. The concept of generalized other is the bridge that links the theory of symbolic interactionism to the question of difference/ diversity *(the different other)*.

The concept of generalized other is a fundamental concept of the symbolic interactionist theory. Mead did not fully elaborate the concept in his published works and the concept was insufficiently developed by the next interactionists or by major commentators (Dodds et al., 1997). Mead defined the generalized other as "the organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self" (Mead, 1964: 154). The generalized other refers basically to the internalization of norms through the process of interaction with other members of society, and is better understood in contrast with Cooley's concept of looking-glass self, which is the process of developing a self-image on the basis of the messages we get from others. The generalized other can be formed only in a social group and is the basis of morality, as the ability to gain a moral consciousness depends on the ability to gain the perspective of the generalized other (Mead, 1964).

Recent commentators of Mead's work consider that the concept of generalized other refers to the ability of taking the role or the attitude of other (Dodds et al., 1997). However, symbolic interactionism fails to address how the generalized other is formed in an increasingly diverse society. Different others produce different systems of morality and culture, which challenge the ability of individuals to put themselves adequately in the position of others (De Waal, 2002). Living in a multi-cultural society implies the ability of taking the role of multiple others, which has its challenges, ambiguities and tensions (Williams 2002). However, adequate discussions of difference are not actually presented in symbolic interactionist theory (Janoski, Grey & Lepadatu, 2007).

Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism (as later named by Blumer) centers on the concepts of the I, the me, and the generalized other. These concepts relate to how the self is formed in relation to the broader groups with which the self is interacting. For Mead, the generalized other is a community of attitudes. These attitudes act upon the me and the 'I' of the self responds. The 'me' represents the socialized, predictable, controlled aspect of the self. The I represents the unpredictable, creative part of the self. The 'generalized other' is the key mechanism in Mead's theory by which we can discuss difference and the linking of difference to emotions. The generalized other represents the attitudes that the individual has to incorporate as part of his or her self. The generalized other provides the opportunity for reflexivity, which occurs when the actor can take

himself not only as subject but as an object as well (Mead, 1962). It is also through the generalized other that the community exercises control over its individual members. There may be multiple generalized others. For example, family, political party, and friendship circle, can be conceptualized as three different generalized others. From the generalized others, the discussion of difference can begin. However, Mead's analysis fails to use the generalized others to introduce a discussion of different races or different genders. (Janoski, Grey & Lepadatu, 2007).

Cooley was one of the earliest interactionists who emphasized the central role of both positive emotions (pride) and negative emotions (shame and mortification) in the process of social interaction (Cooley 1998). While symbolic interactionist theory took up his idea of "the looking glass self" as the basis for the generalized other, it largely ignored his emphasis on emotions, especially positive emotions. Blumer becomes the first of the early interactionists who explicitly approaches the emotions of difference associated with racial prejudice (Janoski, Grey & Lepadatu, 2007). Where the problem lies in Blumer's research is his failure to conceptualize emotions related to racial prejudice and group position. Such situations evoke emotions of fear, anger, hatred, displeasure, pride, disgust, animosity, etc. Blumer's theory of race prejudice is inherently a theory of difference, yet he does not specify the positive emotions that might arise in the gendered or racial interactions (Janoski, Grey & Lepadatu, 2007).

Everett Hughes is the only classic symbolic interactionist who gives us an in-depth and explicit approach on the matter of race in social interactions. Hughes' studies (1945, 1946, 1994) analysed how race influences the knitting of informal groups in industrial settings, and the contradictions and dilemmas of status and race. He introduced the question of difference with the observation that

> "...one of the many dramas of modern industry is that of the meeting and of the working together of people unlike each other in race, nationality, and religion" (Hughes 1946, p.).

Hughes (1946) emphasized that the successful integration of minorities into organizations depends on the skillful manipulation not of the organization chart, but of small groups and cliques and the sentiments of the workers towards diversity. My

theoretical analysis will also include a dialogue with Simmel and Kanter on the significance of numbers in the intra-team and intra-group dynamics and interactions.

Goffman incorporates difference in his research on stigma. Goffman's stigma theory discusses three types of stigma: (1) stigma due to physical deformities, (2) more interactional blemishes of individual character, and (3) the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion. Finally, Goffman discusses 'deference and demeanor' of rituals. Deference is "the appreciation an individual shows of another to that other" and it can be through avoidance, praise, or other actions. Demeanor is a much more general term as it refers to behavior communicated "through deportment, dress, and bearing" (2005, p. 77). Both terms focus on messages coming back to form a generalized other, though Goffman rarely mentions this (Janoski, Grey & Lepadatu, 2007).

The members of diverse teams may continue to view their team members as generalized others representing various race, age, and gender groups. What makes a team bond is when a clear generalized other forms upon the team members and a woman or African-American becomes part of that generalized other. When a team member says "they" the meaning derives from the team status, not gender or racial status. In the end, I make a bridge between the symbolic interactionist concept of generalized other in the group position and the group perspective on diversity developed by *the integration and learning perspective* (Ely & Thomas, 2001). The norms, beliefs and expectations about cultural diversity and its role developed by the informal groups are critical in increasing or decreasing the group's performance. If diverse teams happen to have lower performances, it is because team members develop and use different perspectives on different others. Ely and Thomas (2001) believe that managers apply different paradigms on workforce diversity, which explains why we still do not have conclusive findings on the role of diversity on group effectiveness. Most of the companies (according to these authors) use the access-and-legitimacy perspective (where diversity is incorporated only for facilitating access to minority markets, but is not incorporated in the core functions) and the discrimination-and-fairness perspective (where diversity is encouraged within the company as to ensure a fair treatment to all employees). Only the integration-and-learning perspective provides the rationale and guidance needed to achieve sustained benefits from diversity. This perspective suggests that the insights, skills and experiences

employees have developed as members of various cultural identity groups are potentially valuable resources that the work group can use to rethink its primary tasks, products, strategies and practices in way that will advance its mission (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

In employing the generalized other to the integration and learning perspective in a way not quite used by Ely and Thomas, I am saying that intergroup contact accompanied with a wide range of interactions in a successful group lead to integration and the transformation of a generalized other based on ascriptive characteristics to a generalized other based on membership in a team and membership in the overall corporate group. This leads in the next section to adding another theory to the mix to provide for the mechanism of how the integration and learning occurs. I'll further elaborate on its concerning how various 'generalized others' are refashioned from gender or racial binaries (i.e., black/white or male/female) to "my work team" and "my work group." Further, each of these transformations will involve emotions, and often positive emotions whereby workers refer to the positive contributions of their team mates.

Building on the 'integration-and-learning perspective", I connect their concept to the revised contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), which requires four elements: (1) contact between people of equal status who are perceived to be different, (2) participation together on interlinked tasks preferably in a small group (for Kaizen Motors, a 'team'), (3) legitimacy of working in a diverse environment being expressed by leaders respected by both groups, and (4) a successful outcome recognized by both groups. While the initial contact hypothesis didn't work very well because simple contact can produce conflict, the revised contact hypothesis has worked fairly well in reducing discrimination and negative attitudes toward other groups. Its weakness was that it was often hard to get people of diverse races or genders to work together on a project or in a team, especially in cases of widespread residential or occupational segregation. However, this weakness becomes actually a strength in the lean production environment. Most work is organized into teams (point 2), and management is highly supportive of a both diverse teams (point 3) and successful outcomes – building a high quality automobile at a reasonable cost (point 4). Basically, the revised contact hypothesis fits quite clearly what diversity research describes as "managed diversity." This is the mechanism by which diversity impacts on performance and social interaction.

However, groups' perspectives on diversity and the nature of its interactions depend on proportions and numbers. Building on Simmel's theory of social interaction in groups, Kanter (1977) did groundbreaking research on the importance of numbers and ratios in the nature of social interactions. She analyzed the experiences of women sales managers in a large industrial supply company who were in a token status, meaning that that their number was less than 15% of the entire group composition. Her research mainly emphasizes the psycho-social difficulties that members in the token status have to go through at the workplace. These difficulties range from fear of visibility, performance pressures, exaggeration of differences and dominant culture to role encapsulation and boundary heightening. Tokens also tend to isolate themselves and dissociate from one another because of the pressures that they experience from the dominant group, thus reinforcing the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of tokenism. Kanter (1977) advocates outside interventions to break the cycles created by the social composition of group, and paved the road for a growing body of research on the significance of proportions in the social life of groups. I am going to apply Kanters perspective on tokenism to understand and explain the group functioning and interactions in groups with low, medium and high diversity.

Thus, my theoretical perspective uses: (1) symbolic interactionist theory building on multiple generalized others, positive emotions, and the mechanism of the revised contact hypothesis; (2) Ely and Thomas' hypotheses of the 'integration and learning perspective' which I integrate with symbolic interactionism, (3) revised contact hypothesis on discrimination and prejudice reduction in teams with optimal contact, and (4) the demographically based token theory of Kanter.

Hypotheses and Variables

The independent variable is *degree of diversity*. I am going to analyze groups with low (below 25%), medium (25-50%) and high diversity (more than 50% diversity) along four main dimensions of diversity (gender, race, age and employment status). The dependent variable is perceived *team performance* (problem-solving, productivity, quality and safety) and *team functioning* (team climate, team spirit, conflicts, nature of interactions between team members, emotions etc.).

Based on the past research and my theoretical framework, I advance the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Heterogeneous teams will perform better than homogenous teams.

Hypothesis 2: The higher the degree of diversity in teams, the higher the performance level of teams. Highly diverse teams will perform better because they have a larger pool of ideas, skills and abilities and their work together is more pleasant and interesting.

Hypothesis 3: Team members from diverse groups will alter their conceptions of generalized others from a global 'us and them' approach, and adopt 'team' and 'group' generalized others.

Hypothesis 4: White male team members will develop positive emotions toward diverse team members' contribution to the team based on working together and success. These positive emotions may range from 'humor' to a 'more humane or interesting work environment' due to differing points of view.

Hypothesis 4a: Humor in the workplace reduces monotony and workers who are less uptight about diversity will have the ability to joke and interact with each other. However, this humor must be reciprocal rather than one way.

Hypothesis 4b: Women's contribution to teams is often based on their different perspectives and more caring attitudes toward team members. Work in teams with women is more pleasant and enjoyable.

Hypothesis 4c: Teamwork may lead to team romances, which need to be monitored to avoid problems. Job rotation and transfers can solve these problems (the company already does this to some extent).

Hypothesis 5: The lack of diversity concerning age between shifts can lead to conflicts between shifts and less productivity concerning these much larger groups.

Hypothesis 6: Teams with temporary workers will have poorer intergroup relations and lower performance since they violate the equality of status requirement of the contact hypothesis. Hence, this type of diversity is contrary to the hypothesis 1 and 2.

Research Design

Diversity research is qualitative research by definition, because it is interested in the experiences of diversity. This case study includes multiple methods that complement and inform one other in creating the full picture of diversity in teams at the Kaizen plant. Only the qualitative methods can delve in the intimate life of teams and can help us understand why low, moderate or high diversity teams work differently. They explain more about the spirit of cooperation, climate, environment and identity of teams.

My case study is a combination of methods. First, I observed workers on the shop-floor as they did their jobs, and then I did in-depth interviews with 87 workers in sixteen different teams. These production teams were selected based on their diversity and from both the first and second shifts. Second, I met and interviewed managers in diversity, human resources and corporate affairs about diversity programs. Third, I analyzed corporate reports on diversity and teamwork, and the data from annual employee opinion surveys. Thus, I get the workers' views, the managers' views, and the data that originates from corporate reports and employee opinion surveys. Interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed with NVIVO 7, reports were analyzed for their content, and opinion survey descriptive results were available from the computer. (The next chapter will go into my selection process in more detail).

Conclusion

This case study on diversity will represent a unique contribution to the literature on diversity and teamwork in the Japanese transplants. Although the results cannot be fully generalized to other organizations, they can have powerful implications for the diversity scholars as well as for managers, trainers, practioners, and ultimately millions of workers in high performance work systems (manufacturing, construction, army, police or firefighting). The strength of this project is given by the theoretical contributions to the concept of *different other*, the missing link in the symbolic interactionist theory. This case study will advance a methodological area that had been marginalized in the research on organizations (qualitative research), and provide context and the mechanisms by which gender, age, race, ethnicity and employment status operate within teams at a major Japanese transplant organization.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Data Collection

Any research study should have a continuing dialogue between theory and methodology. Given the complexity of my research topic and the theories it is grounded on, I decided to use a multi-method design, such as a case study. Qualitative research tends to be multi-method in focus and it is employed for purposes of exploration, description and understanding of meanings (Creswell, 1998; Ragin & Becker, 1992). On the other hand, if a social phenomenon is well defined and measurable, a more structured quantitative design might be employed for purposes of theory testing.

A case study is the exploration of a case (e.g. an organization) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (Creswell, 1998). The multiple sources of information include observations, interviews, audio-visual material, documents and reports. The case being studied has to be bounded by time and place. The context (the physical setting, the social, historical or the economic setting) is crucial for the case study. Therefore, a case study serves better the purposes of my study, since it thrives to explore diversity as a working experience, not just as an increase in the demographic composition of teams. There are three types of case studies: intrinsic case studies (that study the uniqueness of a particular case), instrumental case studies (that study an issue within the case, diversity in a Japanese transplant in our case) and collective case studies (that study multiple cases) (Creswell, 1998). The advantage of using a case study is that the hypotheses can be adjusted continuously once the researcher gets more details from the field.

Although case studies had been traditionally considered qualitative studies sui generic, some social scientists consider that not all the case studies are qualitative (Stake, 2000). Actually, Stake (2000) considers that case study is not a method of inquiry, but a study with an interest in individual cases. Yin (1994) includes both qualitative and quantitative methods in the case study development.

Tsui and Gutek (1999) consider that organizational diversity research is qualitative research by definition because it tends to focus on the employment experiences of individuals in the minority categories and its preferred methods are case studies. Consequently, a quantitative study along different ascriptive attributes such as

gender, age or race can fall under the realm of organizational demography research, because it cannot capture the experiences of working in a diverse workplace. Organizational diversity and demography use, according to Tsui and Gutek (1999) different methods and have different purposes of the research.

My instrumental case study is a combination of methods. First, I observed workers on the shop-floor as they did their jobs, and then I did in-depth interviews with 87 workers in sixteen different teams. These production teams were selected based on their diversity and from both the first and second shifts. Second, I met and interviewed managers in diversity, human resources and corporate affairs about diversity programs. Third, I analyzed corporate reports on diversity and teamwork, and the data from annual employee opinion surveys. Thus, I get the workers' views, the managers' views, and the data that originates from corporate reports and employee opinion surveys. Interviews were transcribed, coded and analyzed with NVIVO 7, reports were analyzed for their content, and opinion survey descriptive results were available from the computer. (The next chapter will go into my selection process in more detail).

Operationalization of concepts

Team is defined as "a group of people who work together to produce products or deliver services for which they are mutually accountable" (Mohrman et al., 1995). Whereas many people work together cooperatively, teamwork is a type of cooperative work that requires interdependence. The essence of Kaizen teamwork is job rotation. The ideal size of small teams is 5-7 members. Typically four teams of five members form a twenty members group at Kaizen.

Perceptions on *team performance/ effectiveness* were measured along four dimensions: problem-solving and suggestions, productivity, quality and safety.

The *degree of diversity* is measured by the percentage of women and racial minorities in groups. I will also examine temporary workers and older workers over 40 years old in terms of diversity, though "age" and "employment status" were not used as sampling criteria.

The degree of diversity in groups was measured as follows: 1) low diversity ranged from 0 to 24,9% diversity; 2) moderate diversity was 25% to 49,9% diversity; 3) high diversity was greater than 50%. The percentage of group diversity was measured by numbers of white females (WF), minority males (MM), and minority females multiplied by two because it contains two aspects of diversity. The sum of these three numbers was then multiplied by 100 and divided by the total number of members in the group (TG). The result is the following formula for group diversity (GD):

GD = (WF + MM + 2 x MF) x 100/ TG

I measured the generalized other in terms of how workers evaluate themselves and their team members (e.g. women, minorities, temporaries etc). Key words such as 'they,' 'the team,' etc. will be used to determine how the generalized other is framed.

Pretesting

The interview guide had been pretested on nine workers in the summer of 2005 (Beers Summer Project) and a group of other forty workers from auto suppliers in the Bluegrass area in spring 2006. The pretesting phase allowed me to revise the format and the content of my questions, to delete some ambiguous or unnecessary questions, and simply put, to see which questions work well and which do not work so well with production workers. Also, pretesting on such a large sample of workers allowed me to evaluate the average length of the interview. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes minimum and 40 minutes maximum (depending on whether some sections of the interview guide apply to their experience), with most the interviewees being able to complete the interview in 30 minutes.

For instance, questions like: "Who do you help more often in your team?" were eliminated because every worker said that they help whoever needs help, not just their friends. "Please describe a typical day at work" did not bring a lot of information because most of the workers in Assembly 1 perform the same duties. Also, "How does your identity as a woman/ minority help you in your work?" confused workers because they did not know what do I mean by identity, so I replaced that question with: "How is it to be a woman/ minority and to do this kind of work?"etc.

In the end, I consider that pretesting had been an indispensable phase of the project. The final version of the interview guide is the result of careful selection and

probing of interview questions. The final version of the interview guide contains more condensed questions that allowed me to obtain important information from workers in a relatively short time. Consequently, this pretesting phase had been instrumental in the overall success of the project, because production workers could not be pulled from production for a long time.

The site

The Kaizen plant that we analyzed in this study is a top Japanese transplant in the US and a central plant for Kaizen Motors North America operations. The plant received many JD Power Awards, as well as good evaluations in the Harbor Report. The demographic composition at Kaizen Motors is 21% female and 79% male, 12% racial minorities (1% being Asian of Japanese descent).

Getting entry into the plant was the most difficult and time consuming phase of the project, and lasted almost two years. After I obtained the official approval for the study from the company, a series of preliminary sessions with corporate specialists at the plant followed in the next months. During these meetings, we narrowed down the project to what is feasible to achieve taking into consideration the data available from Kaizen, production cycles, time frame etc. The participation in this research project meant an equal enormous volume of work from the part of Kaizen's diversity specialists, because they had to prepare many internal communication and information memos and meetings to communicate the purpose of the project throughout the plant. According to the Japanese philosophy of decision-making, any approval process is preceded by nemawashi, a preliminary process to involve other sections/ departments in discussions to seek input, information and/ or support for a proposal or change that would affect them. The company also assigned two contact persons from each shift that agreed to provide assistance with the project.

Sampling and Study Population

The study included only team members working on the assembly-line (production workers). Women and minorities were not excluded from the study; on the contrary, this study benefited from the feedback of female and minority team members to document the competitive advantage of diverse work teams.

According to Babbie (2004), sampling is the process of selecting individuals for a study in such a way that descriptions of those elements accurately portray the characteristics of the total population from which the elements are selected. For this project, I did not use probability sampling because workers in my sample had to match some specific criteria (to be assembly line workers, to belong to low, moderate and high diversity teams, to be first-shift or second-shift workers etc.). Consequently, I had to rely on purposeful sampling in order to select informants that will best answer to my research questions. In order to select a representative sample, I performed what I call a multi-stage non-probability sampling (an adaptation from the concept of multi-stage or cluster probability sampling) as follows:

Stage 1: Sampling by department

Since the focus of this project is production teams, we selected initially only the production departments. Thus, we narrowed down the search to six production departments: Assembly 1 & 2, Paint, Plastics, Body Operations, Power Train. Out of these six production departments, Assembly 1 seemed to be the ideal site for this research project for many reasons. First of all, this department is a key department of the whole production system, because it is the site where all the body parts are assembled together and come together as a finished product. Work in Assembly 1 is typical assembly line work, whereas work in other departments such as Paint or Plastics is influenced to a large extent by the specificity of the products they are making. Assembly 2 could have been a good home for the study as well, but this department was an atypical location mainly because it is the line where the new models were tested, and this line could not handle any disruptions caused by the project. Lastly, after evaluating each production department's diversity make-up and the sampling size we needed to ensure an adequate confidence rate in the finding, Assembly 1 met all of our criteria. Consequently, we considered Assembly 1 as being a representative production department for the lean system of production. General Assembly has also an almost identical demographic representation as the overall plant (3.05% minority females, 16.76% white females, 9.49% minority males and 70.70% white males).

Stage 2: Sampling by type of work (assembly-line workers only)

Assembly 1 has a total workforce of roughly 1000 employees. From this sampling frame, we eliminated maintenance and other off-line personnel from our pool, and we came up with a total of 32 groups (697 team members) that work directly on the line. Our sampling unit is the work group, because we did not have centralized data and demographic information available for teams.

Stage 3: Sampling by group size

Work groups in Assembly 1 vary largely in size from the minimum of 14 members to the maximum of 28 members. Therefore, we narrowed down our pool one more time in order to include only groups of a standard size of 20 members (with 2 members more or less).

Stage 4: Sampling by degree of diversity

The degree of diversity in groups was measured as follows: 1) low diversity ranged from 0 to 24,9% diversity; 2) moderate diversity was 25% to 49,9% diversity; 3) high diversity was greater than 50%. The percentage of group diversity was measured by numbers of white females (WF), minority males (MM), and minority females multiplied by two because it contains two aspects of diversity. The sum of these three numbers was then multiplied by 100 and divided by the total number of members in the group (TG). The result is the following formula for group diversity (GD):

GD = (WF + MM + 2 x MF) x 100/ TG

When I selected the low diversity groups, we purposefully selected one group with no females and one group with no minorities.

Stage 5: Sampling by shift

After I selected groups by degree of diversity, I was left with only one low, one moderate and one high diversity group from each shift. The real numbers of the groups will be replaced with L1, M1 and H1 for the first shift, and L2, M2 and H2 for the second shift respectively.

Stage 6: Final sample

This sample of 115 workers represents 16.5% from the total workforce of 697 assembly-line workers of the Assembly 1. The six groups were composed of 16 teams (3

teams with 0 diversity, 5 teams with low diversity, 4 teams with medium diversity, 4 teams with high diversity).

Table 1: Final Sample

Group	White females	Minority males	Minority females	Total Points	Total TM	Percent. Diversity
L1	2			2	15	13%
M1	4	2	1(x2)	8	18	44%
H1	7	2	2(x2)	13	21	62%
L2		2		2	19	11%
M2	4	1		5	20	25%
H2	7	4		11	22	50%

Total: 115 workers

Only 87 workers from the initial sample of 115 workers participated in the study. Some of the workers were on restriction, in their summer vacation, extended weekend, military duties, maternity leave, funeral leave etc. The last two white male teams (10 members) were excluded from the sample because we reached theoretical saturation, a point where data started to become repetitive. The sample included eight out of 16 teams with zero and low diversity, so it included enough information on homogenous teams.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection took place in the summer of 2006. During the summer time, many workers are on vacation and some are replaced by summer temps. Approximately 200 college students, who were employees' children, were hired as summer temps at Kaizen. They were assigned to different departments throughout the plant to alleviate the loss of employees doing vacation time.

Interviews were scheduled from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm for the first shift and from 4,30 pm to 2:00 am for the second shift. Interviews were not scheduled in the beginning and the end of the shift to avoid more overtime; they were also not scheduled on Fridays because lines were short on manpower on weekends when many employees take time off. Interviews lasted on average 30 minutes (minimum 20 minutes and maximum 40 minutes depending on whether some sections of the interview apply), and there were 15 minutes

in between interviews to allow team members to take back their place in the team and to send somebody else to the interview room.

Interviews took place in team meeting rooms on the shop floor during the regular working hours. The Diversity Department was billed for the total amount of work hours missed from production by the workers participating in the study.

Regarding the data analysis, I followed Yin (1994) recommendations of not doing a holistic analysis of the entire case, but rather an embedded analysis of a specific case (teamwork) in relation to its organizational environment. I focused my study on searching for patterns (by comparing results with patterns predicted from theory or the literature) and explanation building, in which the researcher looks for causal links and/or explores plausible or rival explanations and attempts to build an explanation of the case Yin (1994).

Data were analyzed with NVIVO 7, qualitative software that organizes the information in queries resulting from the analysis of interviews along different attributes (demographic variables: gender, age, race, employment status etc.). The software was useful in managing the data in nodes (topics/ research questions), free nodes (resulted from the secondary analysis) and in-vivo nodes (mentioned by the subjects). The analysis of the interviews was centered on discovering interaction patterns in diverse teams (frequencies, magnitudes, structures, processes, causes and consequences of diversity).

Validity and reliability

All methods are flawed in some way or another. This project is essentially a qualitative project. However, quantitative data from the annual company survey were instrumental into backing up the data collected from the interviews. I genuinely believe that a match between quantitative and qualitative methods is ideal for explaining a more complex phenomenon and it could also guarantee to a larger extent the validity and the reliability of the findings. Thus, if the interviews answered *why* a certain phenomenon happens, the opinion survey showed the extent of the problem (Creswell, 1998: 17). Overall, the data collected from the interviews were consistent with the quantitative data of the opinion survey. The qualitative data actually helped Kaizen management interpret the final findings of the survey (e.g. why women and African American are more satisfied with their work at the Kaizen plant). Quantitative approach cannot be so

expressive about the setting, the context or the situation experienced. The qualitative approach has to help them to connect the dots, events to other events by explaining what the internal nature of the processes behind the numbers is. Qualitative methods bring an interpretive approach and offer a complex, holistic picture to the subject matter.

Discussions on validity and reliability are traditionally attached to quantitative research methods. Researchers argue back and forth if this should be a real issue for qualitative methods as well. Validity refers to how well the measurement actually measures what it is supposed to measure. In qualitative research, validity is referred to how plausible, credible, trustworthy and defensible the study is (Creswell, 1998). In the case of qualitative analysis, we have three types of validity: descriptive validity (the accuracy of the description), interpretative validity (the accuracy of reporting the meanings communicated by informants) and theoretical validity (the degree to which the theoretical explanation from the data fits the data, and therefore, is credible and defensible) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Triangulation is one of the verification measures in qualitative research and it refers to confronting multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and to verify the repeatability of an observation and interpretation (Stake, 2000).

The most important limitation of case study as a method of sociological investigation, as suggested by Creswell (1998), is the fact that it is hard to define the boundaries of the case (the time, the events and the processes that will be studied). Some case studies do not have very clear beginnings and ending points and the researcher will set them up after she started the process of data collection. But its most important advantage is the fact that it offers a highly contextualized individual judgment (Stake, 2000), which is exactly the purpose of my project.

The leading method of this case study is the in-depth interview because this whole project is centered on describing the experiences of diverse teams. The quantitative methods are helpless in capturing subtle nuances in attitudes and behavior and also in offering an in-depth understanding of the study matter (Babbie, 2004). At the same time, interviews have limited value in giving statistical descriptions of our organizational population and in allowing generalizability or comparisons across departments.

Interview research has greater validity and lower reliability (Babbie, 2004). Interviews have a superior validity because they can explore the deep meanings of

variables, but at the same time, they can be vulnerable to the way the interviewer filters or interprets the information. Reliability is harder to achieve due to the uniqueness of circumstances (Babbie, 2004). Even though the interviews' findings cannot be generalized, they can still have a descriptive and exploratory value. Face-to-face interviews could give us an intimate understanding of the nature of interactions in diverse teams, tensions and how they can be avoided, suggestions for change, all sensitive issues that are not fit for quantitative studies.

Finally, Wolcott (1990) underlines the absurdity of the notion of validity in qualitative research on the grounds that there are no single correct interpretations for a case. Regarding the matter of reliability, Janesick (2000) noticed that the value of the case study is its uniqueness; consequently, reliability in the traditional sense of replicability is pointless.

However, I tried to do several checks in order to ensure a higher validity of the findings. In order to minimize a gender bias caused by my impact as a female and minority interviewer on the situation and workers' responses, I replaced questions like: "Would you like to have more women in your team?" with "What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with women in the same team?". I tried to minimize in this way a potential social desirability bias coming from interviewees who might have offered positive answers only to please me as a woman/ minority interviewer.

Similarly, in the pretesting phase, I identified a loyalty bias that team members might have for their own teams. For instance, members who identified strongly with their teams tended not to report negative/ internal issues from their own team. The general attitude was that "everything works fine in my team". However, since they worked in 5-6 different teams during their tenure at the plant, I asked them to compare their team with other teams (with lower or higher diversity) they worked with at the plant. They were quicker to report conflicts or negative aspects of teamwork from their former than the current teams. Workers' past experience in teams was an invaluable source of information. Consequently, our findings can be generalized to other teams and groups, not only to the six groups selected initially in the sample.

Only 7 out of these 115 selected workers denied to participate in the study (two white male team leaders, one white female team leader, one white male team member,

one white female team member, and two African American male team members), which I think it is an excellent non-participation rate. It is surprising that three team leaders refused to participate in the study while the members of their team agreed to participate. Interviews revealed that there were prior tensions and conflicts between them and the teams, so their non-participation could not be related directly to the study. I could sense that these team leaders did not want to their perspectives on diversity and teamwork to be on the tape, having the suspicion that these tapes could be used against them in the future. The African American members who denied to participate in the study were described by their team members and leaders individuals "who like to use the race card" (quotation from the interviews). They did not take the chance to speak up about these issues during this study. However, it is less likely that their non-participation biased the findings, since the final sample included a representative number of minorities, mostly African American.

Protection of human subjects

Kaizen's priority as well as my priority as an interviewer was to protect workers' safety during the interviews. Because of the intense pace of assembly-line and attention to quality, workers could not have been interviewed on the line under no circumstance. They were interviewed off-line in team meeting rooms, and were replaced on the line by their team leaders and even by second-shift workers from the same department. This study did not raise any safety risks. On contrary, workers who participated in the study had the chance to physically relax a little bit during the interview.

I also guaranteed each informant complete confidentiality. Real names were replaced with pseudonyms with different initials. I did not disclose to management or other team members information that will connect the opinions with the identity of a particular team member. I have also signed a statement of work with Kaizen stipulating what type of confidential information they handed out to me, schedule of activities, the date when I will have to deliver the final report and their requirements regarding the publicity on the findings of the project.

Chapter 3: Teamwork and Diversity
In The Context of Japanese Transplants

The auto industry has been referred to as one of the most vital industries of the advanced Western economies or "the industry of industries". The evolution of teamwork in the car industry is very important to analyze because these paradigms tend to spread to other sectors of economy (Turner, 1991). The traditional American system of production, the Fordist system, was based on individual work on the assembly line. The reaction of labor to its rejuvenated principles of scientific management manifested through increased turnover, absenteeism, sabotage, low levels of commitment, collective resistance, and adversarial labor-management relations. The contingency theorists (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) would say that the Fordist system could afford to have a rigid organizational structure because its market was relatively stable after the WWII. Only 6% of workers from the US Big Three auto assembly plants were organized in teams in 1993 (MacDuffie & Pil, 1997). But once the markets became increasingly diversified and fluctuating, Fordism lost ground for more flexible systems able to adapt to the new market conditions. The competitive pressures demanding flexibility, speed, quality and efficiency also compelled organizations to accelerate and broaden the implementation of teams (Cohen, 1993).

Teamwork at Japanese Transplants

In the US, teamwork as a new institutionalized form of work had been interconnected with the principles of lean production. The Japanese originated system of production supposedly incorporates the advantages of both mass production (high volume, low unit cost) and craft production (variety and flexibility), and it originated at Toyota Motor Corporation (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990).

From the perspectives of sociology of work, the significance of lean production lies on the fact that it is based on teamwork and involvement, direct participation and continuous training for all workers. It also requires deep commitment from both managers and employees in order to detect any flaw in production and to eliminate waste. The result is an increasing level of quality over time that will eliminate the need for inspection and rework. Other important aspects of Toyotism are: welfare corporatism,

company unions, job security, organizational culture, consensus decision-making etc., but there are variations in the way the lean principles are applied at the Japanese plants throughout the world (Besser, 1996). The success of the lean model, besides the technical factors, is also based on a more thorough inclusion of the social (cultural, ideological, normative) dimension of work on the line. Most of the workers' needs or suggestions will be answered by large Human Resources Departments that take care of workers' welfare. Bonuses, lotteries, day cares, picnics, concerts, training and college classes are only some of the initiatives organized by lean companies for strengthening the "community of faith" with their workers (Besser, 1996).

Batt and Appelbaum' s 1995 study (cited by Hodson, 2002), based on an extensive comparison of self-managing work groups and traditionally managed groups, discovered a number of positive aspects of working in self-managing teams (greater job satisfaction, increased creativity and commitment, autonomy, identity and meaning in work, work humanization, more training and skills, better relations between co-workers and with their supervisors, job security), and of negative aspects (lower pay and no better job security, which does not apply to the US car industry context). The union affiliation and women representation seemed to be lower among workers in self-managing teams (Batt & Appelbaum, 1995).

Teams are able not only to generate a sense of commitment and loyalty, but they become cells or mini-labs of spontaneous learning transforming the organizations in "learning bureaucracies" (Adler, 1992) and having a greater reactivity and flexibility regarding unforeseen circumstances that can happen on the line. Ideally, semi-autonomous or self-managed teams should react faster to their environment and they should be able to speed up the problem-solving processes than in the traditional Fordist system. Teamwork has enormous benefits, such as improved productivity and quality, improved quality of work life for employees, reduced absenteeism and turnover, innovation, and improved organizational adaptability and flexibility. But, it has its downsides too: there is increased likelihood of conflict among people; decisions are sometimes a time consuming processes, and there is increased peer pressure – only to name a few (Simsarian Webber & Donahue, 2001; Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). For instance, Toyota Corporation is open

about the fact that employees undertake enormous responsibilities in the Toyota Production System. The company warns that the broad-range of responsibilities workers have to deal with at Toyota may come as a shock for those who are used with rigid job designations. Time pressure and empowerment are rigorously mentioned throughout the corporate information booklet and in their information seminars (Toyota, 1998; Toyota seminar, 2002)

Many of the early studies of lean production (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990; Kenney & Florida, 1993; Cole, 1985) are optimistic regarding the social invention of lean production. This literature on lean production and the transplanting of Japanese methods to the USA had been coupled with many other critical studies on lean production, studies that are sometimes overlooked by the disciples of lean production. A number of participation observation studies at NUMMI in Fremont, CA (Adler, 1992), Mazda in Flat Rock, MI (Fucini & Fucini, 1995), Toyota in Georgetown, KY (Besser, 1996), Subaru-Isuzu in Indiana (Graham, 1997), Nissan in Sunderland, England (Garrahan & Stewart, 1992), two electronics transplants in UK (Delbridge, 1998) and a GM- Suzuki joint venture in Ontario, Canada (Rinehart, Huxley & Robertson, 1997) revealed invaluable information for the understanding of modern Japanese transplants. Thus, some of them describe the lean system of production as "management by stress" (Parker & Slaughter, 1988), as a "system where indoctrination is so effective that the workers do not even know how miserable they are" (Garrahan & Stewart, 1992) or as a "teamwork system that makes you feel like having a hundred bosses instead of one" (Besser, 1996).

Teamwork can be manipulated by management to encourage employees to monitor each other and, potentially, to report the results to management (Delbridge, 1998). Work intensification, increased injury rates and even unkind acts toward team members have all been reported in team settings (Graham, 1995), but an extreme expression of the discontent with the lean system of production took place in 1992, when the CAMI plant in Canada experienced the first strike in a lean auto factory, "the strike that was not supposed to happen". Workers burned company T-shirts and carried banners that crossed out the company slogans of "open communication, empowerment, kaizen, and team spirit" and replaced them with "dignity, respect, fairness, and solidarity". The majority of the workers interviewed by researchers admitted that their teams are doing

too much work with too few people. One of the most stressful situations for the workers that work in teams is having absent or injured team members, then "we have to work twice than we should be". Most of the managers also agreed that workers at the CAMI plant have to work harder than their counterparts in traditional plants (Rinehart et al., 1997).

This range of theorists observe that beside critical factors that generally affect workers in the auto industry (assembly line, high pace work, high rate of injuries, professional illnesses etc.), the lean system with its principles of just-in-time production, continuous improvement and empowerment can induce even more stress, anxiety, peer pressure, overtime, which on the long run can affect worker's overall well-being (their physical and mental health, their leisure or family life etc.). Still, the Japanese management built its prestige on recognizing the value of their human resources and by giving them no less attention and development than their technology and quality goals. These are key and essential factors, which differentiate the Japanese model from the traditional Ford organization system. So, why Toyotism is blamed for intensification of work, exploitation, enhanced control etc.?

The enhanced control and intensification of work in teams led some researchers to conclude that Japanese teamwork is a fabrication or a functional myth intended to increase the acceptance of the lean model in the western world (Pruijt, 2003). According to Pruijt (2003), teamwork in the lean system does not live up to its expectations of democracy and equity simply because lean manufacturing is not an anti-Taylorist system of production (like the Swedish and German systems), but a neo-Taylorist system of production (other researchers called it "democratic Taylorism", "team Taylorism" or "cooperative Taylorism"). Toyotism can be considered a neo-Tayloristic system of production because it keeps the most central ideas of Taylorism intact: the "one best way" and "the systematic soldiering" (Pruijt, 2003). This idea had been previously mentioned by Dohse et al. (1985, cited by Hodson, 2002), who believed that Toyotism is not an alternative to Toyotism, but rather a solution of the classical problem of workers' resistance to placing their knowledge in the service of the organization. Pruijt (2003) noticed that in the original work of Taiichi Ono, the father of the Toyota production system, there is no mention of teamwork ("Team Toyota" refers to workers'

responsibility for the whole enterprise, not to the working in teams). In comparison to the Anti-Tayloristic teams, teams in the Neo-Tayloristic system grant only the illusion of empowerment. Basically, supervisors (as in the traditional system) are not considered first level of managers and they become team leaders. The illusion of team empowerment is proved by the fact that team leaders are not democratically elected by the team members. They can fill any open position in the factory (after they passed some tests) and these positions most often are not in the teams they used to belong to.

The main difference between the Japanese and the Swedish teamwork is that in the Japanese style, the team leader takes most of the decision, while in the Swedish system, the decision-making process is more democratic and transparent. German and the Swedish systems of production include socio-technical systems design, industrial democracy and humanization of working life (Turner, 1991). In these systems, you can find situations where all the team members can be involved in the decision-making process; they can divide the managerial responsibilities among themselves; they can rotate in the position of team leader or they can even decide to not have a leader at all (Pruijt, 2003). In the Toyotist system, even teamwork is standardized. The takt time is decided two levels up in the hierarchy, and the worker's discretion for using the Kaizen cord is just a way of increasing the product's quality, but other than this, the team member does not have much discretion in the way they organize their own work. In the Swedish systems, there were instances when workers wanted even to abolish the assembly-line or they modified it to increase worker autonomy (Pruijt, 2003).

"While anti-Tayloristic teamworking is not a stunning triumph of organizational democracy, it has at least some examples of worker control" (Pruijt, 2003). Anti-Tayloristic systems are not free of stress either, because team members tend to be overachievers, too. Ironically, the democratic decision-making process in the Anti-Tayloristic system can lead teams to spontaneous Taylorization inside teams. These are the paradoxes of democracy that any researcher of teams has to be aware of.

Vicki Smith (1997), one of the most acid critics of the "new forms of organizations" (quality circles, employee involvement programs, job enlargement and rotation, self-managing teams, continuous improvement programs, organizational decentralization, just-in-time inventory procedures) has a similar position to Pruijt

(2003). She noticed that the flexible forms of production do not bring a substantive break with traditional hierarchical modes of control and authority relations, but "rather they embody and even deepen authority and control by obscuring power behind participatory language" (Smith, 1997: 316). In the lean system, workers are controlled by supervisors, their own peers and sometimes even customers. Ironically, the lean system, trying to avoid the ills that were besetting the mass production system (high dissatisfaction, boredom, alienation, low self-esteem, high absenteeism and turnover etc.) is suspected of becoming an even more subtle system of coercion: the normative system of control. Smith's position is consistent with other findings in the literature. Team-based production methods as new, more decentered and less visible tactics of control have also been incriminated by Yates et al. (2001) for being "Trojan horses of empowerment", by Barker (1993) for actually tightening the "iron cage" of teams or for instating a tyranny of team ideology (Sinclair, 1992), a discipline of surveillance (Sewell, 1998) and for threatening workers' self-identities (Ezzamel & Willmot, 1998). Actually, Simon forecasted even from 1945 that the fully unobtrusive forms of controls (where managers control the cognitive premises of action, e.g. culture, indoctrination, organizational socialization, selective hiring, personnel rejuvenation, training) are the most efficient, relatively inexpensive and less resented forms of control, while direct fully obtrusive controls (sanctions, orders, directives, surveillance, rules etc.) and bureaucratic unobtrusive controls (specialization, standardization, assembly line etc.) are the most expensive and most resented strategies that managers can use in controlling their workers.

The implementation of team-based structures in organizations was intended to bring more equity at the workplace, and to reduce the social distance and the hierarchy between organizational classes of workers. Ironically enough, teamwork is able to solve some problems in the social organization of work (e.g. the need for socialization, the need for esteem or self-actualization, facilitated communication and interaction etc.), but it generates a new category of social problems. Teamwork can generate inequality. Companies that rely on Just-in-Time production hire a significant temporary workforce as a buffering strategy. This situation leads to increased job security for the permanent workers and continuing job insecurity for the temporary workers. The wage inequality between the temporary and the permanent workers can induce a lot of tensions and

resentments between the members of the same team, since the temporary workers are paid almost three times less than the permanent workers, they do not have the same benefits, the job security or the status of the permanent workers (e.g. temporary workers are paid by the subcontracting human resources agencies around 13$/hour). So, the division between core and peripheral workers can bring a lot of strains among the members of the same teams. Consequently, the issue of inequality should be one of the first priorities for any human resources specialists dealing with teamwork in lean companies.

The matter of job security leads to higher concerns for inequality among managers and regular workers as well. Middle managers are the most vulnerable category of employees in the lean system, while the lower workers on the hierarchical ladder have better promises that they will not be laid off when the company faces harder times. Vallas and Beck (1996) showed how the adoption of new technologies in manufacturing plants generates forms of inequality between the younger and more educated engineers and the long-employed workers. Although the Japanese plants in the US did not transplanted entirely the Japanese model, the US lean companies tend to give considerate attention to long-term employment. The recruitment and employment patterns of these companies lead to increased employee inequality on the long run. The hiring of large cohorts at once, lower rates of turnover and secure long-term employment determine the aging of the workforce. Teams will be predominantly formed of workers in their forties or fifties, with significantly high wages (seniority pay system), while the young workers will represent a minority, most likely formed of temporary workers with lower wages.

Since women and racial minorities form the majority of temporary and part-time workers (e.g. in 2002, women are more than twice as likely as men to work part time[1]), the inequalities between male and female or White and non-White workers in terms of wages, recognition and status will tend to be preserved. In 2004, the auto-industry had only 25% women employees[2], but these figures are expected to increasingly grow in the next years. It is anticipated that the new flexible forms of work will redraw the lines of

[1] Women at Work: A Visual Essay, Monthly Labor Review, October 2003

[2] Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005: www.bls.gov

gender and race hierarchy in organizations with the female and racially diverse contingent workforces pressuring the white males in permanent jobs to intensify even more their work for fear of not being replaced with the temps (Smith, 1997).

Teamwork at Kaizen Motors

Teamwork is the central theme of the Japanese organizational culture. Previous studies show how the vocabulary, philosophy and structure of Japanese organization are oriented toward the team culture (Fucini & Fucini, 1991; Besser, 1996, Graham, 1997 etc). Teams in the Japanese auto industry are typically composed of four or five team members, supervised by a team leader, who takes the technical role of a lead hand than a supervisory role (Adler, 1999). The team structure is continued higher on the hierarchical ladder with four or five teams composing a group of twenty workers on average. Then, the company team is composed of all the local employees whereas the corporate team includes all the members of the corporation in US and around the world (Besser, 1996).

In the Toyota System of Production, for instance, teamwork does not have the strict meaning of "work in a semi-autonomous team of five members", but a larger connotation of people who work collaboratively. Therefore, the concept of teamwork is used interchangeably with groupwork since it can be applied to small groups of five as well as to large groups of twenty workers.

The auto companies use different concepts of teamwork adapted to the Fordist, neo-Fordist or post-Fordist systems of production: Saturn work unit has 10 to 15 members with high autonomy who plan the unit operations, run its own budget, recruit new members, manage supplies, control quality, decide the cycle and rhythm of job rotation etc. (Cornette, 1999), GM work units are made of 10 members and four work units form a work unit module. (Marx & Salerno, 1999), Peugeut teams are made of thirty workers divided in three groups (Durand & Hatzfeld, 1999), Renault teams are called elementary work units and are made of 10-20 workers (Freyssenet), Fiat teams are composed of large elementary organizational units (20-40 workers) (Camuffo & Micelli, 1999), Volvo teams are made of 10-15 workers (Huys & Van Hootegem, 1999), Saab work group organizations have 8-10 members (Brulin & Nilsson, 1999), Opel teams have 16 employees (Albertijn et al., 1999), while Mercedes-Benz teams are called self-organized work groups (Gerst et al. 1999). In all these cases, the size of the teams is

dictated by the nature of the production system. Since the lean production emphasizes more the quick responsiveness to problems, the lean teams have a small size as team leaders can solve problems quickly only if the teams are small.

One of the most surprising findings when I went on the field at the Kaizen plant was to realize that workers did not know their team number. This came as a shock to me knowing how much the lean system of production is intertwined with the concept of teamwork. However, workers knew very well their call numbers (of course) and the group number. This fact made me realize that teamwork at Kaizen has indeed a very general meaning of collaborative work and is not restricted to "work with the members of my team". Actually the structure of work on the assembly line does not give much room to interaction between team members. Thus the meaning of teamwork at Kaizen is less connected to intimacy, empowerment and self-management and closer to job rotation.

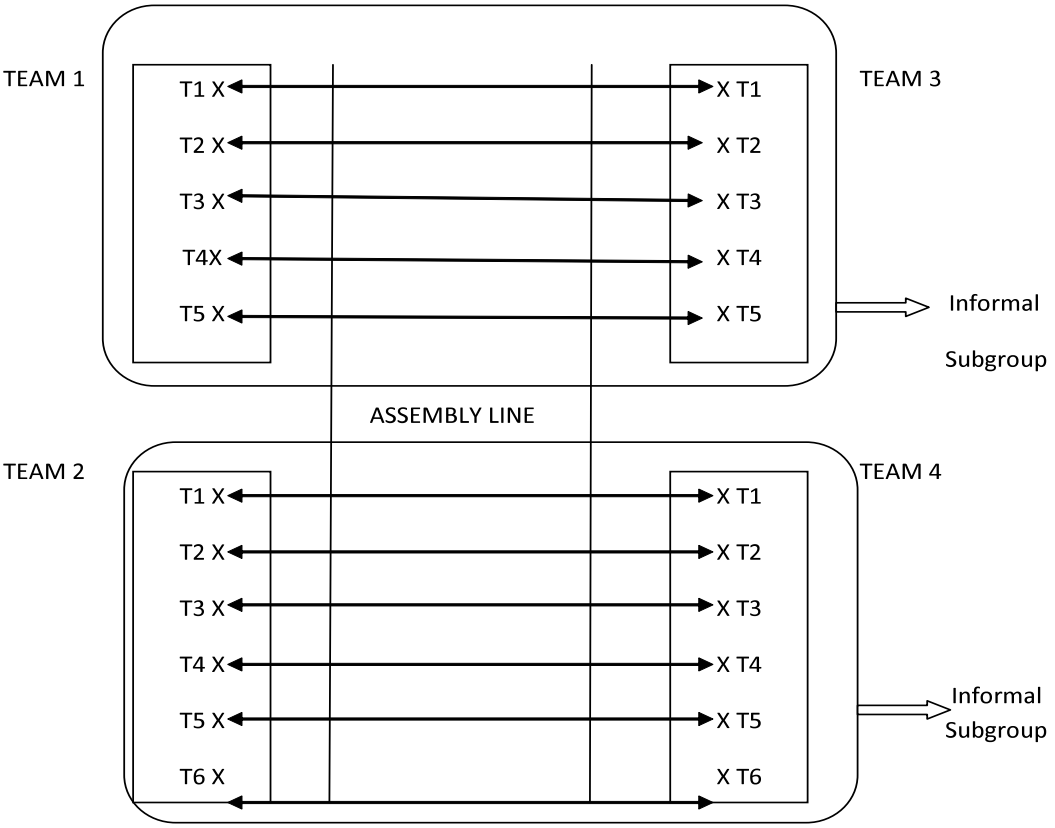
First shift workers included in our sample had the average team tenure of 4.5 years and an average organizational tenure of 11.8 years, which showed that they change 2-3 teams during their tenure at the plant. Second shift workers in my sample had the average team tenure of 1.6 years and the average organizational tenure of 6.5 years, which shows that the team turnover is higher in the second shift (workers change 4 teams during their stay at Kaizen).

The following diagram shows the arrangement of teams in a group of twenty workers. Because team members rotate jobs between themselves every two hours (T1 rotates jobs with T2, T2 with T3, T3 with T4, T4 with T5 and T5 with T1), they take sequential positions on the line. Therefore, team members usually engage in more conversations and chat with members of the team that works on the other side of the line. The interactions between the members of the team are in most cases reduced to the five minute team meetings organized every two hour. During these breaks, the information exchanges and communication between team members are related to safety and quality concerns. Workers need to know what jobs hurts and where and how it can be fixed or what are the most frequent type of defects, because they follow on each other's steps and can pass valuable information to others to protect each other from injuries and overtime.

However, this internal team organization leads to the development of two informal subgroups of ten workers (members of two teams). In some instances, team

members socialize and converse more with the members of the opposite teams than with the members of their own team. This group structure explains why team members identify more with the members of their large group than with the members of their own team. Thus, although the small team structure was intended to maximize social interdependence along with work interdependence (Adler, 1999), Kaizen teams are not in the end such a great breakthrough from the American teams made of twenty members.

Figure 1. Group Structure at the Kaizen Plant



Diversity at Japanese Transplants

As more Japanese transplants opened operations in US, the big question for everybody was how successful they will become in adapting to the local culture and traditions based on different gender roles. US is also a melting pot of different races and ethnicities, whereas Japan's population is mostly homogenous, immigration being more a recently phenomenon than a historical trend. Women are considered to be "Japan's

biggest untapped labor asset"[3], as Japan has a low inclusion of women in the workforce (only 55% of Japanese women work). At work, they tend to preserve the traditional role of women servicing men (Mehri, 2005). Japanese women tend to leave the workforce after they get married and have children, and never return (Besser, 1996). Consequently, they tend to occupy more clerical positions (office ladies, Ogasawara, 1998) and teaching jobs than managerial or executive positions.

The Japanese auto transplants were under tight scrutiny from the very beginning. The Mazda plant was the first Japanese transplant in America, and it has a unique story, given the complicated nature of the American- Japanese relationship. At the time when the Mazda plant opened in Flat Rock, MI, Mazda was against female production employees in Japan, but the Japanese managers knew that they have to accept women in their American plants. Most of the Japanese managers and trainers did not have to deal with women in their whole careers. At first, they appeared to treat women in an unfair way comparing with men: women were pushed around more often and more forcibly, and screamed at more harshly by trainers (Fucini & Fucini, 1990: 112).

One of the first challenges faced by the female workers at Japanese transplants was the contrast between the traditional notion on femininity and the nature of their work on the assembly line. Although women earned their place in the US auto industry since World War II, they had to compete at first with Japanese managers' own preconceived notion of femininity: women are inherently weaker, less capable than men and consequently, they have to be watched closely. Fucini and Fucini (1990) describe how the Japanese managers at the Mazda plant initially had the impression that women who prefer to work in a male-dominated environment have to be sexually loose (assumption that was addressed immediately by the upper management). The Japanese managers were also surprised by the assertiveness of American women (e.g. they offered classes on Japanese culture and to the astonishment of the Japanese, half of the trainees in samurai swords drills were women, and half of the trainees of flower arrangements classes and Japanese ceremonial tea rituals were men).

[3] Japan: A Downside of Downsizing, Business Week, November 7, 2005

At least in the start-up phase, Fucini and Fucini (1990) show that Japanese managers' assumption on women as the weaker sex made it difficult for the American women workers to received equal treatment with their male counterparts. During the training courses, they were addressed in a very sarcastic way if they failed to catch on a lesson right away, and they preferred to teach the American male workers first, and asked them to teach the women in return. Later on, the Japanese became accustomed with the American way and the harassment and intimidation stopped. Female workers started to appreciate their status at the Mazda plant in comparison with other auto factories: "If a woman walked through the plant at Ford it was like a zoo. The guys just went out of their mind; they were screaming, they were whistling. It's not like that at all here [at Mazda]." (Fucini & Fucini, 1990: 62)

The Japanese managers had no sympathy for the sometimes conflicting demands of job and family because at home in Japan, they basically did not have any role in managing day-to-day family affairs. Judy, a female worker, is very ironic about the family values they were indoctrinated with during their training sessions at Mazda. As a single mother of two teenage kids, she gets up at 4:30 in the morning and gets back home by 6 and has to be in bed by 9:

> I do not have time for my kids, but I cannot quit either, because we need the money. After one year of working at Mazda, their grades began to fall, and I was called by the teacher to school. I asked the manager's permission to go to that appointment, and he told me that I will be reprimanded if I take care of my personal problems during the production time. I went anyway to talk to the teacher, and yes, I was reprimanded. I know women who've had kids sick at home, and they couldn't get permission to use the phone for five minutes to call them, because it would throw off the production schedule. (Fucini & Fucini, 1990: 115)

In the first phase, most of the Japanese transplants had been located in disadvantaged regions that happened to be largely white areas: Georgetown, KY (Toyota), Smyrna, TN (Nissan), Marysville, OH (Honda), Normal, IL (Mitsubishi), Lafayette, IN (Subaru-Isuzu). The black community was discontented because it had a traditional access to the auto industry. Honda has paid $6.5 million to settle various EEOC complaints since opening the plant. Most of the African American workers at the Mazda plant describe their relationship with the Asian managers as being OK, which

means that they do not bother each other, but they do not have close relationships or socialize outside work (Fucini& Fucini, 1990).

It seems that racial harassment was present at these plants from the very first days of production. At the beginning, the Japanese were harassed by American bigots at the Mazda plant. Some construction workers wore T-shirts with a picture of the Hiroshima bomb and with a short comment: "Made in the USA, tested in Japan". Yet, as Fucini & Fucini (1990) described it, the Japanese showed no emotional response to any obscenities shouted at them, or to the racist graffiti in the restrooms. The overall community welcomed the Japanese in their town. The Japanese families received many invitations for dinner on Thanksgiving Day or Christmas, but there were also guys that shouted at them that "the Japanese are taking American jobs", although Mazda created many jobs for Americans.

Regarding the aging factor, Mazda offered a total wellness program that tried to bring the physical age down to the chronological age through fitness and other programs. Mazda cared about the well-being of its workers in a way that few American manufacturers ever had and implemented a zero accident policy. In reality, in the early phase, more accidents and lost working days due to injuries than the average for the state of Michigan. Most of the accidents occurred by the end of the shifts (Fucini & Fucini, 1990: 178). The heat and the 57 seconds takt time took their toll on the workers. There were small lines of fatigue that gathered around the eyes and mouths and made them look old beyond their years. Many workers lost also a lot of weight when they adjusted to Just-in-Time work pace. According to the Detroit doctors in the Mazda study, workers started to develop carpal syndrome only after a year and a half, which is earlier than the workers in the Big Three plants. People on restriction were often ridiculed and harassed by co-workers, managers and doctors. The Safety and Well-Being chapters of the Mazda study end up with a major question that does not yet have an answer: where are you going to put the older guys after they cannot keep up anymore with working on the line, because the lean system of production does not leave out that many support jobs or they are outsourced to different contractors.

Graham (1995) brings evidence of sexual division of labor in the Subaru-Isuzu auto plant in Indiana, with women getting the lowest-paid and the hardest jobs. Women

were also asked more often to do the sweeping and the cleaning after work. Their physical abilities and leadership potential was frequently questioned in the initial phase of the plant (1990). Graham also noticed that there were no African Americans in management positions above team leader. Her explanation is that because the Japanese employers do not want to hire unionists and it happens that many of the black workers are pro-unionists, the screening procedures deliberately left out many black applicants.

Graham (1995) emphasizes that teamwork is the key stone of management by stress, and that there was constant peer pressure not to report injuries at the Subaru-Isuzu plant. Graham's point is that women experience the intensification of work differently than men because of their role in the family. The burden of overtime is more intense for women because of their psychological as well as physical responsibilities in the home. As an insider who worked on the line at Subaru-Isuzu, she describes how there was a wide perception at the plant that carpal tunnel syndrome is a "woman disease". In an attempt to break down these rumors, women would rarely go to see the doctor, and preferred to suffer in silence.

Rinehart, Huxley and Robertson (1997) noticed some tensions over gender relations at the CAMI plant, a Suzuki-GM joint venture, in Canada. Some men perceived that women got the lighter, easier jobs, with better working conditions, such as Paint and subassembly, but three quarters of respondents, men and women, thought that they were treated equally at CAMI. Younger males were reportedly more open to work side by side with women. The male dominated jobs were in Stamping and Welding. One woman reported that male co-workers did not always know how to act: "Some feel like they should always help a woman; others stand back and let me see if I can do it". (Rinehart et al, 1997: 114) One woman manager said that she wants to convince women to get into non-traditional jobs, but that "they do not like Welding because it's dirtier, noisy and hard work to do; they are intimidated by the robots, by the sparks" (Rinehart et al, 1997: 115).

Rinehart et al. study (1997) discovered that the number of women with repetitive strains is double than the number of men with the same affections. Also, half of the women answered that they are tired all the time or often, because the domestic work added to overtime. Another explanation to this gender disparity of repetitive strains is

men's reluctance to report a developing work injury, which is consistent with the literature on masculinity and work (Rinehart et al., 1997)

Regarding the complex equation of diversity and teamwork, the CAMI study concludes that teamwork can aggravate the nature of the relations between men and women in physically demanding jobs. As a local union leader put it, men are frustrated of working with women in teams because women couldn't pick up the slack and men had to take up the excess. Men did not want women anymore in their teams, because in the job rotation cycle, women would take the easier jobs and they would end up with the harder jobs more frequently. A male team member complained that women do not participate to install back seats as part of their job rotation: "they cannot do it because they are women, then I am sure as hell that I cannot do it, because I am too old for this" (Rinehart et al, 1997: 118). As a solution to this problem, two persons were assigned to install the back seats. In other plants, they introduced come-along seats that help with the installing of back seats; so, what seemed to be a gender problem was in fact a job design problem (Rinehart et al, 1997).

The overlap between gender concerns and team pressure was even more evident after workers came back from a medical leave related to an injury. If you had been injured, you could refuse to do certain jobs as parts of the job rotation. Three women reported that when they could not rotate jobs, there was such a pressure from the other team members that they had to go on medical leave for stress. These women in consultation with the union filled a complaint under the Human Rights Code, blaming CAMI's concept of team for "pitting worker against worker" (Rinehart et al, 1997: 119). This example illustrates how teamwork, despite its many advantages, can alienate workers one from another and can bring enhanced pressure or inequity across gender or racial lines. The conclusion of the CAMI study is that lean production is not intrinsically a more equitable place than mass production. On contrary, work intensification under lean production may affect women more severely. Intra-team pressures exacerbate tensions across gender lines, which require the intelligent redesign of jobs that may disadvantage women (Rinehart et al, 1997).

The Mitsubishi plant in Normal, IL, probably has the most infamous reputation on gender and racial relations. In 1996, 500 out of 893 women in the plant filled a sexual

discrimination lawsuit, claiming that they were victims of unwanted groping, grabbing, and touching, threats of job loss if they refused sexual favors and complained, sexually derogatory comments and sexual graffiti that sometimes named specific women. All this happened while the local union did not do anything to support women's cause. Mitsubishi lawyers presented in court the medical history of some of the plaintiffs arguing that these women had abortions because they were sexually loose. Also, ten minority workers received compensations in 2001 for racial discrimination by the automaker[4]. Recently, a Japanese executive resigned from his position of President of Toyota Motor Manufacturing North America upon allegations that he made sexual advances to his Japanese female assistant. Toyota settled the case for an undisclosed amount[5].

At the same time, Ford agreed to pay 8 million dollars in 1999 in the largest settlement ever reached between the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and any automobile manufacturer based in the US[6]. Harassment did not stop though and Ford was sued again by EEOC in 2001. All these data shows that sexual harassment is not present only in the Japanese companies, but across all the auto industry in the US. Therefore, what happens at the team level is critical to the understanding of the dynamic of gender and racial relations in the Japanese transplants.

Diversity at Kaizen Motors

Kaizen Motors wants to move beyond a reactive and defensive approach to make diversity a part of its business strategy. Kaizen Motors's multi-billion dollar diversity investment over the next ten years will be used not only to recruit a diverse workforce and to expand its customer base, also as an organizational strategy to achieve core business objectives and to become an employer of choice. As Kaizen Motors aspires to gain recognition as a top diversity organization, she also intends to foster positive relationships with the entire community and to use diversity as a key strategy to global expansion.

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[4] New York Times, March 31, 2001

[5] New York Times, August 5, 2006

[6] New York Times, September 8, 1999

Diversity training is an integrated effort at Kaizen Motors. Initially, these diversity courses were offered only to group leaders and upper management, but team members started lately to be involved in diversity awareness sessions. The first two weeks of training of any temporary or full-time member at Kaizen Motors include an anti-harassment video that teaches workers what types of gestures and comments are appropriate or inappropriate. Because it is hard to draw a firm line between an inoffensive or offensive joke, this video sends a very effective message: "Say it only if you would say it also in front of your mother or grandmother!" I found absolutely fascinating how teamwork was connected to family in the creation and enforcement of norms. It is like teamwork is this sacred familial space, where love and respect are first and foremost.

Conclusion

Teamwork in the context of Japanese management is a complex concept full of contradictions. It combines the benefits of empowerment with enhanced control, participation with peer pressure, job enrichment with work intensification. Similarly, diversity can also become a double-edge sword. The Japanese transplants do not have the cleanest record on promoting equal opportunities at work or in combating sexual and racial harassment. Therefore, teams as the basic units of the Japanese auto factories are ideal places for observing how diversity "works" on the shop floor.

Twenty years after the Japanese auto makers laid ground in USA, the transplants are entering a new phase: the maturity of lean production. As the Japanese Big Three are striving to dominate the US auto market and the global market, we are trying to understand what the role of diversity is and teamwork in Japanese transplants and how do they contribute to their overall organizational success and performance. In the next chapters, I will analyze diversity and teamwork along four main dimensions: gender, race and ethnicity, age and employment status.

Chapter 4: Gender and Teamwork

This chapter is an in-depth analysis of male-female interactions in production teams on the shop-floor. It focuses on female workers' experiences on the line, their contributions to the team efforts, and the perceptions of the male co-workers regarding what female workers bring to the table in teams. In the end, this sociological analysis focuses on emotions generated by the gendered interactions, identity transformation of Kaizen women and how it leads to unexpected dating, affairs and divorces.

Evidence from other studies on auto plants show that women are considered more careful and consequently, they are in charge with the most expansive machinery at Volvo plants (Wallace, 1999). Teamwork can aggravate the nature of the relations between men and women in physically demanding jobs. At the GM- Suzuki plant in Ontario, CA, women could not participate to install back seats as part of their job rotation. As a solution to this problem, two persons were assigned to install the back seats. The result was that men did not want women anymore in their teams, because in the job rotation cycle, women would take the easier jobs and they would end up with the harder jobs more frequently. In other plants, they introduced come-along seats that help with the installing of back seats; what seemed to be a malfunctioned relationship between men and women was in fact a job design problem (Rinehart et al., 1997).

Current findings on how gender influence team performance are mixed. Previous studies on gender in teams revealed a null relationship between gender and productivity, with gender having other related negative outcomes in the case of teams performing physically demanding jobs: feelings of isolation, dissatisfaction and reduced or lack of attachment (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Riordan & Shore, 1997). Other studies raise questions regarding what is the percentage or ratio of gender diversity that is detrimental to effectiveness. For instance, women did not perceive the highest degree of satisfaction in gender balanced settings or in female settings, but in male- dominated settings (Wharton & Baron, 1991).

Terry Besser (1996) collected the data for her book in 1990 in the early phases of the Toyota plant in Georgetown, KY. Her study, a fascinating account of Toyota System of Production as a community of fate and teamwork as its cornerstone, concludes that

you cannot have a successful implementation of teams if women's experiences are not taking into consideration (Besser, 1996). "Team Toyota" includes an interesting chapter on the Women of Toyota, which deals with the experiences of women on the line as well as the experiences of the invisible Toyota women, the wives of the Japanese managers, who contribute equally to the Toyota success. Besser (1996) based her study on in-depth interviews with workers from different departments and managerial levels off-site and via snowball sampling. She describes how initially there was a taken-for-granted maleness of the work force, and there were not enough restrooms for women. Although a Japanese company, this plant did not encourage the traditional Japanese custom of male socializing outside the working hours, but rather tried to support the team spirit through family oriented social events, where workers could bring their spouses and children. Picnics, Christmas parties, trips to baseball games, birthday parties or group pizza lunches were all considered as team building events (Besser, 1996)

One female worker reports that "males are trusted more quickly, and were made to feel that they could handle responsibility much sooner". She concludes that there might be sexual harassment at the plant, but it may be better and certainly no worse than many other large manufacturing plants. Besser (1996) follows up on this idea. According to her, the treatment of women in Japanese transplants might not be different from the situation of women in similar US organizations, but the employees have different expectations for a company that emphasizes empowerment, continuous improvement, and teamwork along with family values. Then, the workers feel betrayed and express anger if the company does not live up to these expectations (Besser, 1996).

Besser (1996) describes humorously the first meeting between a female team leader and the male teammates under her supervision. One of her male co-workers says: "Holy Cow, what have I done? I don't know beans about cars myself, and who's my first team leader, a waitress. What am I going to do? And I thought, I have to teach this girl something. She woops it in there- zip, zip, zip-, just like that. She's an extraordinary, outgoing, self-confident individual and she'll do well. "(Besser, 1996)

This project is trying to observe how the dynamics of gender and racial relations change when men and women work together for a long time in a similar Japanese plant. The phase of mature lean production undoubtly leads to a redefinition of gender roles on

the lines. This chapter offers a closer look to the contributions and advantages of women in teams, their experiences on the line, women and leadership, sexual harassment and discrimination, as well as to the connection between their work and family (affairs and dating among team members, family time pressures, family conflict and divorce etc.)

Kaizen Women: Skills, Abilities and Repetitive Work

Items such as: "How is it to be a woman and to do this kind of work?" (for women) and "What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with women in the same team? (for men) lead immediately to the question in which way women's skills and abilities affect or influence teamwork. Jobs are set up ergonomically in such a way that tall or short, slim or heavy workers can perform them to their full capacity regardless of gender. For instance, if you are not very strong, you may ask for tool balancers or hoists to lift heavy parts, or if you are short, you may request for a platform to lift you up. Women may also request lighter guns because they have smaller hands. In one of the heaviest manually lifting parts of assembly, workers have to pull heavy body parts, such as the front glass, for instance, which weighs 30-35 pounds, but the takt time is so fast that some women feel that they do not have the time to use hoists, which takes a toll on their bodies on a long run When these types of adjustments do not work (workers are too tall or too short), workers (mostly women) are transferred to other teams, so that they can avoid being a bad ergonomic position.

The repetitiveness of the work is physically daunting, and some female workers think that some jobs are not set up with a female in mind. Some women prefer to learn the new jobs from female trainers based on the assumption that females learned to do these jobs in a different, less physical way. For instance, females assemble body parts in the car in a more gentle and careful manner than men who just slam them in. However, if a female one best way and a male one best way would be encouraged, standardized work, reminiscent of Tayloristic practices, but still present in the core of lean production, could be compromised in the entire plant.

Male team members do not question anymore women's ability to do this type of work as in the initial phase of the plant. They appreciate that the most important thing that guarantees' someone's success on the line is to come to work with an "I can do

anything" type of attitude. Following the "equal, but different" perspective, they observed that whereas men have more upper body strength, women tend to have a lot more lower body strength. A male worker noticed:

> This is rough for women. I think about it all the time, but Jackie and Connie beat me up, and I am a guy in pretty good shape. Both of them are petite. Jackie weighs 100 pounds. Connie is 4'11'', has quick little bitty hands and I can put her against any guy here.

One of the female workers confessed:

> It's hard to be a woman and to work here, but it's something that I wanted to do. It's tough. I had sometimes problems with the process, because you need a lot of upper body strength. When I mentioned this to my group leader, he said: "I don't look at you as a woman. I look at you as a team member".

The easiest way to identify a generalized other is when a person refers to "them." The key to finding "multiple generalized others" and "multiple selves" is to locate who might be in the different "theys" being discussed. My first male interviewee told me "You guys are completely different than us". It suddenly stroke me that men indeed develop a notion of a "feminine other", since even I, the interviewer, was considered "one of them", the women, although there might be little resemblance between my skills and abilities as a sociologist and the skills and abilities of the assembly-line women. The professed upper-body strength of men and lower body strength of women are also dimensions of "masculine other" and "feminine other". In the end, the team leader tries to simplify the complicate intricacies of selves by minimizing the feminine self and maximizing the team member identity ("I don't look at you as a woman. I look at you as a team member").

Another woman shared a completely different story:

> Height is an issue for women here. I am 5''4', and there were times when I had to jump in the air to reach the Kaizen. My team leader saw that I struggle and went immediately to tell that he is afraid for my safety, that I might be injured. They had to make a tool for me to pull the hook down to me so I can build the car.

Both men and women consider that strength is not the most important ability or quality that makes a good worker in the auto factory. A team leader with more

than 15 years experience of working with different teams and groups noticed that women have quicker hand speed, whereas men have bigger and slower hands, therefore being more likely to work in Chassis. Agility and versatility is a must have quality, therefore petite and slim women may have sometimes an advantage over men, if they have to lean under or over cars.

Women and Heavy Work

The first impression that strikes you when you talk to the Kaizen men and women is that they are not tall, heavy built and with large muscles. The assembly line has its own natural process of selection and survival of the fittest. The men and women of the plant (including in my sample) who made it over the years are predominantly slim and very fit physically. Many of them loose a lot of body weight during their initial adjustment to assembly line work (25 pounds on average, but it can go up to 60-70 pounds if the worker was overweight before coming to work at the Kaizen plant). As a female worker puts it,

> Nobody can walk in here and do it. It is a mental-physical combination, if you are a man or a woman. Some people cannot handle the pressure you are under, the fast pace. It's a mindset. You have to get this frame of mind that this is what you have to do and you will do it.

The teams with low number of women or no women at all in my sample were located in Chassis. Chassis is heavy assembly where workers install the fuel line, the break line, the fuel tank, and it is a more physically demanding work obviously. A male team member said that he understands why women have not been assigned on their line in the last 4 years since he is there. Men are also transferred to other lines if they are too short and if they struggle ergonomically with the jobs in Chassis. Other men considered the absence of women on Chassis line as a form of reverse discrimination. They were told that the line used to have women, but they ended up hurt, and consequently, they were assigned to other stations. It led some of the men think that the company uses double standards of performance for men and women.

Also both men and women can be stronger at certain jobs in the job rotation and weaker at others. For instance, some workers enjoy installing the front seats, which are heavier, than putting rubber band around the doors, which involves more push

from the shoulders, wrists and elbows. Team members mention frequently about trade-off arrangements in the job rotation cycles across the gender lines. These trade-offs are informally negotiated between the men and women of the team without involving their team leaders or group leaders. Team leaders do not usually care about these arrangements, as long as they do not imply that some workers have to do more work than they should normally do. A male team leader expressed his opinion on this kind of trade-offs:

> The woman in my team is just as good as any men I‘ve got. There are some jobs she just does not care for, like going undercover underneath the bumper. They are not physical, but she does not like them. She will do jobs that are a lot harder. She just did not get the neck of it. Typically it does not happen to trade off jobs. I wouldn’t say that this is a woman’s problem. It’s just hers. We have men that come in saying that the shoulder is killing them and that they would like to trade off, too.

However, in all the teams included in my sample, it was only the females that asked for trade-offs with the guys and not the other way round. Team members and team leaders seemed to be sensitive to the issues of fairness and equality. Men expect the work to be done if you are a woman or not, because men and women receive equal pay. Male workers said that they try to help a woman the same way they would help a guy. Some men do not agree with this type of trade-offs and complain that their colleagues tend to “baby-sit” women especially if they find them attractive. Trade-off arrangements also lead to tensions between the men who want to help women and the ones who don’t.

Female and Male Teams

Women function at their best in low gender diversity teams. 10 out of 21 women said that they prefer to work with men, and more than this, that they prefer to be the only female in the team, while 11 women said that it does not matter for them if they work with more women or more men. Contrary to Kanter’s findings on role capsulation, tighten control and enhanced pressure to perform, half of the women in my sample do not suffer because of their token status in any way, while half of them really enjoy being the “queen of the teams”. The question is: Why do the Kaizen women enjoy and prefer tokenism? First of all, we have to take into consideration the context of work in a predominantly masculine occupation, and to understand that there is pride and enormous

satisfaction for women to join a male dominated field, which is associated with more prestige and power. The money that Kaizen women earn on the job and the challenging opportunities for professional development offered to them have an empowering effect. Second, they do not want competition from other women because they enjoy getting the males attention (and there's plenty of it!). We can safely assume that being the only woman in a team is seen more as a privileged than encapsulating position, women enjoying more the attention and protection associated with their token status.

The strength of this study comes also from the fact that the team members had a long experience of working in teams at Kaizen Motors (sometimes even more than 15 years) and they could compare their experience of working in a mixed team versus in male or female teams. Women justify this choice by saying that women get along with men better than with women. They think that men are more relaxed and laid back, and are not as easily to offend as women. Women also get a lot of respect from men, for being able to put up with the work on the line, respect being one of the fundamental values that Kaizen tries to enforce every day.

Relationships between women are often described as cattiness, nitpicking and bickering (e.g. "doesn't matter stuff, what somebody is wearing, how her hair is" etc). This is contrary to the classical stereotype that women are more tolerant, yes, but not with each other. Women in female teams report that they are also a lot more graphier in their conversations than they would be in the presence of men. Women say that they have the same experience with working with women at other previous workplaces, not only at Kaizen.

A very attractive woman in her mid 40s describes her experience when she first joined a female team:

> This is like back in high school. All of us were young, in our mid 20s and early 30s. It got to a point when I really did not want to come in here. This is how bad it was. When I started seeing this guy, I don't know if it was jealousy, but the other girls stopped talking to me. They like attention, people to stop by. Some of the younger ladies here…they feed on it.. When an attractive girl or semi-attractive girl would come to the group, they did not want anything to do with her. Nobody will talk to her. It took them a month till somebody talked to me. It was bad, it was unreal.

Group leaders consider that female teams have a lot more HR problems, and that even HR Department is aware of this type of problems with female teams. The only man in a female team describes a similar experience:

> In a female team, it is a lot more drama. They could not get along, and I got caught up in the middle being the only man. I wouldn't say women are like that, but just these particular women. They would complain about anything. They did not like the rotations, the jobs…, they would bring their problems from home to work. I just stood back and let it happen, I tried to keep my mouth shut. I wanted to stay out of it. We the men get together and laugh about it. You get in trouble if you get involved. They try to involve us too, but I stay strong. I was in that team for 5 years, so I put up with it for awhile, and then I decided to transfer. I even left day shift for night shift and I enjoyed that. I felt that they went to HR enough, so I did not want to complain about it, too.

Another male team member thinks that there is gossiping and cat fighting between women even in balanced teams (2 women and 2 men). Then, men feel caught in the middle of the rivalries between the two women. This male team member describes how uncomfortable this situation makes him feel, because both women would come to talk to him about the other person and the other way round. Women were pressuring him to take sides, but he remained neutral and befriended both of them.

However, there is an interesting dynamic of gender and age that can pollute interpersonal relationships in teams. The standard high school type of bickering in female teams carries on into the adult years, then it fades away after awhile. Calmness in teams seems to be a product of the longevity of both the team and the team members. After the initial storming stage, middle aged women or women who worked for a long time together start feeling more like sisters than rivals. Also, men develop friendships closer to brotherhood.

Male teams also have a lot of competition and contrary to the common knowledge, a lot of arguing too. It is sometimes hard to be a man in a team of males because there is a macho attitude of picking on the weaker guys. Also, the competition on the golf or basketball field is continued at work. A male team member describes this experience:

> There is more competition between us when there are more males. It's like a basketball game, a lot of competition. What could you win? Just the

> chance to trash somebody… There is also a lot of trash talking when there's only men. Guys are harder on one another. We joke a little harder. We are pretty harsh about how we do on the job. If somebody is behind, we tease him: What is your problem? Did you have a bad night?, a bad weekend? It's the football game? Or "Look at that sissy, he cannot keep up".

However, team members notice that men don't get mad on each other and do not stay mad on each other. If men get into a fight, two days later they talk to each other, whereas women stay mad for a longer time. They also show different emotions when they are upset: women cry, whereas men tend more to curse. Male teams also have a tighter bond facilitated by their common interests in sports (golf, poker or basketball).

Men's Views of Women at Work

Women seem to be catalysts of communication and information-sharing in teams. The general perception is that women like to talk and are easier to talk to. They are said to be more forthcoming, open to discussions and to speak up their mind. Male team members often seek help and advice from women regarding their personal relationships. Teamwork offers an in-depth understanding of the psychology of the opposite sex, which can be used in marital relationships. Some men say that working side by side with women opened their eyes about what works well and what does not work so well in their relationships at home, so it brings more gender awareness. A male worker particularly said that he is asking advise from women on how to make his relationships work, because, in his perspective, men have a problem with committing to long-term relationships whereas women seem to be more able to sustain long-term relationships. Another male worker puts it this way:

> I like working with women. I always have. It's not that you mess around your wife, but you've gaining perspectives on if she gets upset on you and you do not know why. If I ask my male friend, he tells me: "You know women: they are all crazy". That's the answer you get from a guy. The women will say: "Let's go back and find out what lead to that". You remember you forgot her birthday was last week. They will wake you up.

The blurring division between work and home are present again in this example. Whereas usually the family is the primary agent of socialization about gender

roles and boys learn within the family how to behave with the opposite gender, in our case, the team becomes the primary agent of socialization and ultimately, workers' primary universe. Here all the truths are rediscovered and renegotiated, including the gender relations, and then, they are transferred into the secondary universe of family.

Preference for Working with Women in the Same Team

Chat and humor is one of the most desirable activities on the line. Work is so repetitious and automatic that having a talkative and interesting colleague on the other side helps time to go by quickly. Men prefer to work with women in their team not because of their physical abilities, but mostly because their chat breaks the boredom of the line. As many of them put it, women spice up discussions, and talk about different topics other than golf and NASCAR race. Some men like to talk more to women than with men, because their conversation is different. They are more interested in talking about gas prices, sales, kids, and family stuff than about guns. The line brings into play a new dimension of masculinity: men who enjoy talking as much as women. Talking is an escape getaway from the tyranny of the line that is treasured by workers regardless of their gender. On the same time, they also feel that they have to watch their language more.

As the only man in a team of four women, Dan says that he would not help women more than he would help men, because men and women get the same pay. The years spent in this female team made him draw the conclusion that women receive help quicker if they have an injury and that team leaders tend to babysit them.

Overall team leaders and group leaders almost unanimously prefer to have more women on their teams, possibly because they have received more diversity training, but also because their long experience with teams gave them the chance to notice the roles and contributions that women bring to teams. Team leaders appreciate that women bring a family atmosphere to the group, which is an important element of the Kaizen culture. They particularly like the blend between the feminine and the masculine side, which gives teams the family atmosphere. Team leaders notice that women talk things thru more, are not intimidated to ask questions and have on average better communication skills and more creativity. They seem also to be more determined than many of the men on the plant. Women are also more engaged in social activities like a

lunch with a season theme and encourage healthier eating choices. Most of the team leaders do not have a preference to work with men and women in their teams. One of them says that it is nice to come next after a woman on a job because their areas are usually neat, clean and tidy, and have more finesse and are detail oriented. Another team leader appreciates that women bring calmness to teams, because boys are rowdy.

To the extreme, a male team member said that he feels more comfortable when there are more women around. The presence of women on the line brings not only a new level of calmness, but also a feeling of security. This team member said he does not want to ever have to work with a whole male group again because work in a whole male group resembles with work in a prison.

From the 66 male team members interviewed, 11 preferred to work in teams with more men, 16 said that they prefer to work in teams with more women just so they can have more balanced teams and the rest of 39 male workers said that they do not have any preference for men or women, and that gender composition of teams does not matter. Do men enjoy their token status in female teams as much as women? Most of the team members, males or females, were not eager to report aspects from the life of their teams that they dislike. They were rather protective with their team's reputation. However, they did not shy away from reporting incidents that they experienced in other teams, as long as the identity of these teams is unknown. Consequently, two men working in female teams reported that they are not "bothered" to work in female teams, and that it does not make any difference after you get used with it. These male workers exposed more of a resigned attitude than excitement that they work in female teams, which is different from the experiences of females in whole male teams, who obviously enjoy their tokenism.

One of the reasons of why male teams prefer to have more women is related to safety. Because of the males' macho attitude, they are inclined to give an extra push even when they are in a bad ergonomic position. If they women in their team, they think that ergonomic problems will be highlighted quicker, which will benefit men on a long run too.

An African American male worker brings a completely different perspective on women:

> I think women are a little more open to the differences, just because they are more nurturing. They will give people chances. I am more open towards women, to what they have to say. I would like to make their work easier. When a woman is hurt, I like to help her out. This is the way my mom brought me up, to always look out for women. This is part of our African American culture. We were raised more with our mothers. All we had is our mothers and their protection.

Taking into consideration that half of the African American kids are raised by single mothers (Stat. Abstracts, 2005), it is interesting to see that African American males can be more sensitive to women's issues, while women are more sensitive to diversity issues. This African American man says that he is more willing to help women, whereas most of the white men say that they would not help a female team member more than they would help a man.

. The general opinion of both men and women is that women are more detail-oriented, pay attention to their surroundings and learn quicker. They are reported to be more quality conscious and willing to fix defects or to countermeasure. They also bring a different level of compassion and empathy in teams.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Working with Women in Teams

Only 19 out of 66 men considered that there are some disadvantages when you work with women in the same team; the rest of them thought there are no disadvantages or only advantages. The more important disadvantages are: women like to trade-off jobs (5), women have less physical ability to do overhead work and lifting, which leads to more restriction in the future (5), women break down more, and consequently, are more often on restriction, which hurts the job rotation because the regular team members have to rotate more thru the hardest jobs (4), men have to watch their language around women / fear that you might say something that is considered sexual harassment (2), dating (2), more gossiping and back biting and less cohesion in teams with women (2), ergonomic positions that are not favorable for women e.g one leg in and one leg out (1), women like to get cards around holidays or for their birthdays (1).

The participation rate of women and minorities in Quality Circles is considerably higher than the company average, but we have to keep in mind that even the office staff

can participate in Quality Circles. For instance, 34% of women and 31% of minority workers participate in quality circles whereas the overall participation is 21%. The situation is completely different when it comes to participation in Suggestion Systems. Only 6% of women and 7% of minority workers participate in suggestion systems comparing with 12% participation rate in the company overall (Kaizen Motors corporate records, 2006).

The philosophy of continuous improvement requires workers to meet every two hours to discuss about quality, safety and other challenges that team members have on the job. Work on the assembly-line demands increased awareness to problems, and workers sometimes have to find spontaneous, quick solutions to problems. Many of them said that they do not even attempt to use anymore the formal System of Suggestions because it is very hard to pass a suggestion. It seems that Kaizen system of production reached a maturity level, where it is really hard for a worker to come with a totally innovative solution nobody tried before. So, when we mention suggestions in this study, we are referring to the informal suggestions and solutions that team members have to look for in daily team activities.

Regarding the impact of gender on daily activities involving *suggestions and problem-solving,* 37 team members consider that gender is irrelevant when it comes to problem-solving and suggestions, 22 team members consider that men are usually more active, 18 team members consider that the contributions to problem-solving of men and women is equal, and 10 team members consider that women are more active with suggestions and problem-solving. The general perception is that contributions to suggestions and problem-solving are heavily influenced by the seniority and experience on the job, not by gender. However, some team members consider that men are more active with suggestions because they are more comfortable with industrial settings and are more ambitious about their jobs. Women are usually vocal about suggesting improvements and solutions, because their bodies break down more, so they are directly interested in making their jobs easier. However, gender has something to say about how a suggestion is received by the team. Women make more suggestions, but not necessarily better suggestions; women come forward with more suggestions, but guys are more successful in getting their point crossed. Therefore, sometimes when women make

suggestions, their implementation goes to men, after they evaluate if it is a good idea or not. A male team member said that women, especially if they are the only woman in the team, will shy away from coming with their suggestion forward during the team meetings, and will often ask men to present their idea to the group: "Hey, Mark, why don't you tell them about this?"

Regarding *productivity*, team members unanimously agreed that men and women have equal productivity on the line. Men and women who cannot keep up with the pace of the line eliminate themselves or can be fired regardless of gender.

Contribution to *quality* is an interesting dimension of team performance that shows gender differences. 48 team members consider that gender does not influence quality, 17 team members consider that men and women are equally concerned with quality, 16 consider that women are more quality conscious, and 6 consider that men are more quality conscious. The aspect of quality is tricky because, as one team member puts it, men might manage to do the work in time but their quality is not right, whereas some women might struggle with the job, because they want to turn in a perfect quality product. The perception of the teams is that women are first of all, more quality conscious and detail oriented. Women are more conscientious about their work, more aware of their environment, and catch more defects. A team member appreciated that men are more task –oriented, concerned with getting their work done, while women are more detail oriented and concerned with the quality and appearance of the product. Some even say that women are perfectionists, and that they want everything to be in order, neat, and clean (e.g. "it wrecks their brains if they have a defect"). Another male team member tried to explain me why females in his team have this obsession with quality:

> Have you seen the female athletes running at the Olympic Games?. They never cross the boundaries like the male athletes. They have more finesse. It's the same here.

It is interesting that family is brought again into discussion as an explanation for women's preoccupations with quality. Women's interest with detail and appearance comes from the fact that they take care of the house and the children, where everything has to be neat and well organized. We see again the spill-over effect of family and team. However, even though women are considered more quality conscious, team

members insist that this does not mean that women's overall quality is better than men's. For instance, as women tend to talk more on the job than men, their attention might suffer and they could end up turning in more defects than men. Also, they might not be very careful with quality if they cannot keep up with the pace of the job. Individual performance data, when available, will bring more light into this issue

Nick tells how the men of a predominantly male team respond to the pressures of a quality conscious lady:

> She was born with it. It is her nature to pay attention to all the details. We are happy when she pats us on the shoulder about a defect. She grabs the team leader: "Hey, look this guy missed something down the line!" We are not upset, no way! It saves us 30 minutes, because the whole group has to be here after shift to fix the problem. So we tell her: "Thank you! We go home early thanks to you".

Safety is the number one priority at Kaizen Motors, therefore it is not surprising that 50 out of 87 workers consider that safety should be promoted by everybody regardless of gender. 19 team members appreciate that men and women are equally safety conscious in their teams, whereas 17 team members consider that women are more safety conscious at work and only 1 team members considers that men are more safety conscious at work. The main reasons that can explain women's safer behavior are related to the fact that women are not as strong, and have to protect their bodies more. As the administrative records show, women have a higher percentage of cumulative affections (38,15% instead of the average of 21%), but a considerably lower illness rate (12.82% instead of 21%), so our qualitative data are consistent with the quantitative data showing that women have a safer work habits. Women explain men's higher incidents rate by the fact that men embrace the macho attitude that they cannot get hurt ("Guys feel they are tough and can't and won't get hurt. They are risk-takers and their egos get them in trouble"). Evidence from other studies on auto plants show that women are considered more careful and consequently, they are in charge with the most expansive machinery at Volvo plants (Wallace, 1999).

Men agree that some of them want to get the work done without taking care of safety, and are more reckless with their bodies than women. One of them said that

when a piece of machinery is broken, men in their team will continue to work, but the woman will stop, and will not continue to work until that piece is not fixed.

Blurred divisions between home and work are brought again in the discussion. Team members consider that women have safer behavior at work because of their experience with raising children. As team members put it, women are more careful with accidents because their primary role at home is to be caretakers. Men's perception is that women have a mother intuition for safety, which they carry with them at work.

Gendered Interactions in Teams

Gender is a crucial factor that influences team dynamics. This study is unique because it compares the nature of men-women interactions working in the same team for more than ten years versus gender interactions in short-term teams (average of three years). You would think that after working with each other for so long, team members become androgynous to each other. Despite the company rhetoric of assimilating teams with families, team members do not see each other as brother and sisters not even after 10 years of working together. Sensual talk and humor is still present in the daily interactions of teams. I interviewed Sheena, a thirty eight year old gorgeous single mother, right after she came from a two weeks medical leave. She tells me very happy and content that she was on restriction for a breast augmentation surgery. She was open about it with her male colleagues, and says that she is proud of them for being so nice and supportive. One of her male colleagues, however, agree that they are very close to each other in the team, but that when "Sheena had the boob job, everybody knew it about it. She got some ribbing about it. They (the other men) gave her a hard time". From this story, I was not surprised that men teased Sheena for trying to be more sexually appealing, but that she wanted to save the face of her male colleagues and to protect the image of her team.

A moving story of helping behavior in diverse teams involves a fifty three years old female worker. She recently had to cope with the death of her husband, and soon after that she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She came back to work six weeks after the surgery, and started slowly to adjust to the assembly-line work like the rest of the workers who come back from restriction (a week of one hour on and one hour off). She did not try to look for other easier jobs, because she wanted to make as much money

as she can, so she can be a greeter at Wal-mart after she retires. The team leader explained how the whole dynamic of the team changed upon receiving the news that their colleague has cancer:

It was devastating to learn she has cancer. They were all grieving. They all encompass her. She came back after double vasectomy and nobody could hold her down. She is a strong woman. We kind of buffered her a little bit. She did not want to be slow on medical. It was also the monetary issue of being out. We compromised and gave her a good rotation and the whole team supported that. It was not a question. She is strong now as she's ever been. She is stronger now because she realizes how much everybody cares about her.

A team leader tells another story of grieving and mourning. When one of his men died in a car crash, all the team members pulled together as a team, carpooled and went to his funeral. What I find extremely fascinating about these stories is the in-vivo concept of grieving in teams. Grieving is basically a sign of the close relationships that develop between team members over the years. Grieving, I think, is the ultimate symbol of the team as a family or community of fate. We grieve or mourn only close family members or friends, not strangers. The teasing in breast augmentation story and the grieving in the breast cancer story are both of them stories on team cohesion and closure.

Talk and chat is a central aspect of men-women interactions in teams. The major discomfort perceived by men in mixed teams is related to the fact that they have to constantly practice censorship in their conversations (e.g. "we have to watch our language. We are not allowed to be rude or lude"). In other words, the most significant discomfort in mixed teams does not come from differential in performance, skills, abilities, conflicts or helping behavior, but from elements of team climate, like talk. Chatting on the line involves also a lot of teasing, silly talk and cutting up. After working together for a long time, some teams develop a certain intimacy, then women are treated like some of the guys, and men do not feel that they have to hold their guard around them. After they start being comfortable with each other, nobody likes running to HR to report inappropriate jokes. Women, however, do not feel that they have to watch their language around men, but they notice, too, that male conversations change in the

presence of women (e.g. “If they are all in the room, they will not say certain things in front of me just out of respect for me”, says a woman). Diverse team members are an asset for mixed teams because they offer the promise of more exciting and more diversified conversations on the line. Another advantage of gender mixed teams, as perceived by team members, is that diverse teams have a better pool of different perspectives, especially in a problem-solving situation.

How is it to Be a Woman and to Work on the Line at Kaizen

For most of the women, work at Kaizen Motors comes as a culture shock. Some say that work is very hard and strenuous, and if they did not need the money, they would have quit in the first six months. However, Kaizen Motors annual opinion survey shows women having slightly more positive opinions about their work at Kaizen Motors than men. Kaizen Motors women are happier and appreciate more their jobs than their male counterparts. What makes women happy here despite the nature of the work and despite the fact that they are a minority on the line? The following series of interviews gives us a glimpse into the reasons why women’s experiences are so gratifying:

> It is very empowering for us, women, to work here. I like doing the same things that men do. I do as good a job as theirs, if not better. I started here out of fight, because my husband said I cannot do factory work. I wanted to prove him. He is shocked that I made it for this long.

A female temp soon to be hired full-time says:

> I will be the breadwinner soon. I will make double than my husband, so he should be at home babysitting.

Full-time workers with little experience can earn up to 50,000$ a year, including the overtime, while experienced workers bring home 70,000-80,000$ annually. This is a rare job opportunity for workers with only high-school education. Thus, workers’ high divorce rate can be explained not only by work related factors (the nature of assembly-line work and the toll it takes on workers’ well-being and personal lives), but also by social factors. When women having only a high school degree with 15,000-20,000$ incomes from dead-end jobs manage to double or triple their income, it has a liberating effect on them. Kaizen Motors offers an environment where they have the respect and opportunities to succeed in career like any of their male colleagues. These

kinds of achievements make them feel more secure in their future and more confident in their capabilities of taking care of themselves and their children. Consequently, they leave bad and sometimes abusive relationships. Many women I talked to were raised in homes with family values that enforce the traditional gender roles of men being the providers and women being the homemakers. Thus, it is not surprising that their jobs at Kaizen Motors open them to a whole new world. They talk about the cultural shock of working in a male dominated environment for the first time in their lives. To their surprise also, their male colleagues are not making fun of them, but on the contrary, they are the "most awesome, respectful and best friends" they ever had in their lives. Here are some of their stories:

> I've been very happy so far**.** You can't find a better job anywhere in this state, unless you have a good education. Most women here are single mothers. We are more dedicated and appreciate somewhat more our jobs here. Money is not so important, but benefits made a big difference. Very good insurance… I have this security. It is so much better than before.

> I am divorced and have no children. I did not get to finish college, and for me as a woman, it's a good job. I could never make that kind of money elsewhere. I did a lot of secretarial work before and I wasn't happy. I can tell you that you can work as physical but not make this kind of money somewhere else. I worked two full-time minimum wage jobs and did not bring home what I brought home as a temp here. Where I am from in (rural area), men are used to bring home the money. There are not a lot of opportunities for women as are for men. Men in my family use to make this kind of money, not the women. Women in my family, teachers or nurses, do not make half I make. The stress of not having the money to make it when I had the two jobs, the stress was so mentally affecting and demanding physically…I was so worried!

Another young female worker shares the same view:

> I think women are happier here. My opinion: I am happier to work here than my husband is. I like it better, he hates it. For me, I feel that I did not have to do this kind of job. I chose to do it. Last year he made 70,000/ year, and I made 50,000/ year. I was making 22,000$ a year before coming here, so it's double pay. I hear a lot of people complaining about the company. You know what? I tell them: "You should work for a company that does not provide anything and pays you 10$/ hour".

A forty-five year old female worker who was recently hired full-time described me her journey from factory to factory till she ended up at Kaizen. She says that she is so happy with her new job that she regrets that she came here so late in her career:

> I can't believe that I got this good job so late in life. The money we get here is a lot better than college educated people in professional jobs. I am sorry that will be able to work here only ten, maybe twelve more years.

Being a Kaizen worker gives these women more prestige and pride about themselves. Especially the women that come from underprivileged backgrounds are more respected and have a higher status in their families and communities back home:

> People back home think that I am rich. They say: "Oh, my God, you work at Kaizen"!! I am glad that I work for a company that I know 25 years from now I can retire from here.

Most of the workers that start working at Kaizen loose between 10-35 pounds in their first six months on the line, and some overweight people loose even 50 pounds. Women in my sample get an immense satisfaction from their weight loss and use their job as a work-out plan. This is another factor that explains women's job satisfaction at Kaizen. It again boosts their confidence and makes them feel more comfortable with their personas. On a long run, these drastic changes of persona might latently contribute to shifts in their personal relationships, and divorces down the road. One of the most important reasons of why some workers feel "at home" at work is that they are more appreciated, feel more competent at work than at home and their colleagues become an important source of emotional support (Hoschild, 1997). A female worker explains:

> I am happy because I lost that many pounds. It makes you feel more attractive. Men treat you better. It is probably more in my head than anything else.

Although women are underrepresented in this plant and in this traditional masculine occupation, the master emotions that they report in the interviews are those of pride, satisfaction, self-esteem, empowerment, enthusiasm, gratitude etc. Instead of being ridiculed in degradation ceremonies (Goffman), female workers enjoy an elevated status at the Kaizen plant, which make them feel like the "queens of the teams". This last

example dethrones the concepts of shame, embarrassment and stigma as the master emotions of social interactions (Mead, Blumer, Goffman). Our interviews show that crying and embarrassments are rather collateral emotions that emerge in the process of social interaction between men and women, while the main emotions that govern their work are pleasant sociability, feeling comfortable, and having fun together. Thus, the data supports our initial hypothesis that symbolic interactionist theories fail to capture the relevance of positive emotions in the gendered interactions (Janoski, Grey & Lepadatu, 2007).

Women's wealth and new image can attract the unwanted attention of opportunist males. They deal with it in an uncompromising fashion, which is a symbol again of their empowerment:

> I am single now and dating, and as soon as men hear that I work at Kaizen, they say: "Oh, wow, I can quit my job now". You can be sure that I will never go out with that man again. I know they might be joking, but I don't think this is funny.

For the most part, women consider that they have a lot more patience with repetitive work than men. The company statistics show that women have indeed a safer behavior at work. The demographic composition of the plant is 21% women and 79% men, however the percentage of injuries is 18.64% for women and 76.27% for men, whereas the cumulative illness rate is 36% for women and 56% for men. Men and women also report having different types of injuries depending on their height: back problems for men and shoulder problems for women (however, this is only workers' perceptions and it must be double-checked with official records). Generally, men think that women are a lot different than them (both physically and psychologically) and that women are not necessarily less strong, but smaller frame.

Tina says that she enjoys the work on the line more than behind the desk in a bank. She likes being active and engaged in all sorts of activities, like problem-solving and quality circles. She is worried though because she has no idea how long will she be able to work in assembly.

> I don't even have to think about what I am doing. When they take a part away after a model change, you are still reaching for that part for 1-2 weeks. Some people are bored to tears. This job is not for everybody. It

> takes a personality to do this kind of work. My husband cannot do this kind of work for instance. With the takt time, you are really pushing yourself. I hope I can retire from here.

Carey, a forty five year old woman, suffers from carpal tunnel syndrome from leaning so much over the car, and says that:

> My hands will not last me more than eight-nine years if I keep doing this. I sleep at night with wrist braces on because my hands will fall asleep. Wrist braces hold your hands in a certain way so you are not bending them. My hands will fall asleep when I am drying my hair in the morning or when I drive the car for more than an hour.

An older woman in her mid fifties talked about her recovery when she came back from restriction. Older workers' recovery takes more time in comparison with younger workers. She stayed at home five months after a shoulder surgery. When she came back from restriction, she had two weeks of introduction and during those two weeks, she was allowed to work one hour in and one off, then two hours in and two hours off. Somebody from the second shift was filling in when she was off. Then, the team leader told her that she should get in the line because that person has to go back to the second shift. She was basically thrown into the job although she could feel by herself that her body did not heal properly. She had to go back on the line, otherwise, her team members would have to pick up her slack. She says she was rushed into the job and had to perform hurting at a high speed, so she could barely keep up with the speed, but did not have the time to check for quality.

Jim, a twenty-nine years old male man, thinks that:

> Women are smaller frame on average. These jobs tend to hurt them more. On our line at least, women tend to get hurt more. You can hear sometimes comments like "I wish we will get here people that do not break that much".

At the same time, women are more vocal when they cannot perform a job properly and are more concerned of changes that might affect their health. So, the whole group is pushed to kaizen on how to make those jobs lighter or easier. As a result, the whole group, including men, benefits from the new improvements.

An older team leader with a lot of experience of working with different teams thinks that:

> Women have more cumulative injuries because they are apt to take more pain than men. I saw my wife giving birth. I couldn't do that. Women deal with pain. They rather work with it. That's my personal opinion. As soon as a man hurts, he will let somebody know because he does not want to let his family down, if he is the breadwinner.

That women are able to take more pain is only part of the explanation. The high rate of cumulative injuries is explained also by the fact that women start the "second shift" as soon as they arrive at home. Their hands relax only in sleep because they have to take care of most of the household duties, all of them involving physical work with the hands (the second shift, Hochschild, 1990).

Female Team Leaders

Three out of eleven team leaders from the sample were women. Female team leaders seemed to be very comfortable in their authority position of leading men in a male dominated environment. One female team leader said that her authority was rarely challenged in the three years experience as a leader:

> I had issues only a couple of times with a couple of men who came in the team thinking that they do not have to listen to me because I am a woman. I told them that unfortunately I am the boss and we all have to keep our jobs. Being an African American leader was never an issue for me. When a female team leader tells a man that he did not do something right, it bothers him only if he is insecure, if he does not know who he is.

As we can see in this interview, this team leader mentions her multiple selves (e.g. being an African American leader is not a problem, but being a female leader was a problem). This statement implies that her team members develop different concepts on the generalized other that sometimes clash with each other. Since team leaders' main responsibilities are teaching, training, scheduling, quality and safety, they are not in the traditional supervision position of exerting control and power over subordinates. Another female team leader said:

> Some men might not appreciate having a woman team leader**.** I do not set rules really, I enforce rules. I do more teaching and training. I enjoy it because I do so many different things. I am not interested in

> moving up to the position of group leader, because I have a daughter to take care of.

Female team members do not necessarily prefer to work with female team leaders instead of male team leaders, although they are more comfortable with female leaders when they ask for break time to go the restroom. Although break times are scheduled every two hours, the 5 minute breaks sometimes is too short to go the bathroom or the bathroom might be too crowded, so team members can press the Kaizen cord when they are on the line and ask for emergency relief. A couple of female workers said that they would prefer to have female team leaders, because they will not shy away from confessing that they struggle with their jobs in the beginning.

Sexual harassment and discrimination

Women said that they do not want the company to give them any kind of special treatment or to show them favoritism. A female worker is very trenchant about this issue:

> They should not make different regulations for women, because it is reverse discrimination. They should not change their business for us. I took this decision to come and work here in the factory. If I cannot do the job at the same level as a man, I should not be here.

However, some male workers accuse some of their colleagues for helping more the attractive women on their teams, and blame their leadership for being more sensitive to women's issues. When asked how men and women get along in her team, one woman agreed that:

> There is favoritism, a certain in-company politics that you have to play. A pretty smile on your face can take you pretty far. I don't know why guys complain about it. For guys, if you play golf or hang out at Applebee's, you will go a lot further than the ones who don't. We also have to play the old boys game. If you want to be on a certain circle, and if you have an interest in advancing, you have to play their game.

Japanese auto companies have a bad reputation on the issues of gender equality and sexual harassment. A recent opinion survey at the Toyota Nizumi plant in Japan showed that 75 percent of the women and 62 percent of the men surveyed said that they knew of someone who had experienced sexual harassment on the plant. Most of the

harassment incidents involved rude jokes and sexually oriented questions, a quarter involved being touched, and 4 percent of the women said that they have been forced to have sex with a superior (Mehri, 2005). However, an overwhelming majority of the female interviewees claimed that the Kaizen plant is the best employer they ever had, that they do not feel discriminated because of their gender and that their male colleagues are the most respectful and nice colleagues they ever worked with. The firing process in the Japanese system is usually very lengthy. It is peer review based and usually gives the worker three chances to improve. However, sexual harassment is the quickest way of being fired at Kaizen Motors.

There are few feminine voices who reported that sexual discrimination or sexual harassment happens in teams. They should be given consideration, however, if the company wants to improve the relationships between men and women at the plant. A female team member said:

> It is a little discrimination. If a guy says something, it is accepted immediately, but if we say something like women, we have to prove it's right. We are yelled at more easily than at men. They are afraid that we will break some machinery. It is assumed that a man knows what he is doing, and he will not break anything, but they forget that some of us have been doing this for such a long time.

Another woman said:

> We do not get any special preferment. I like this equality that Kaizen promotes here. I know a team leader who harassed a temporary twice. He invited her to his vehicle outside, and his wife worked here, too. If you speak to me like that, I will let you know upfront how I feel. He is my neighbor and I was in awe when I heard this.

Another woman follows on the same line:

> Here they make a point of diversity. Anti-harassment is driven in your head. Now even the male chauvinists pigs keep their opinions to themselves. At other places I worked in you are discounted if you are a woman. Most people are helpful here. Some are idiots, but they will always be. They will dismiss you, talk down to you, make things hard on you, trying to go fast and slam you, this kind of thing…

Team members reported three cases when female temps were reassigned to their teams as a follow-up to sexual harassment allegations. These women seemed to have a

poor integration into their new teams particularly because of their lack of trust with men. Although the new adoptive groups tried to encompass them and communicate with them during breaks and lunches, these women preferred to minimize their interactions with the other team members. One of them even said: “If this is not related to work, I do not have to answer to you”. Finally, team members complained about their limited integration and consequently, the women were reassigned to female teams, where they probably felt more comfortable and secure. Their behavior is a proof that they have a post-harassment traumatic experience that makes it hard to them to reestablish trust and reintegration in teams.

Another female worker remembers her experience as a female temp having to deal with a team leader “who did not like women”:

> When I was a temp, I went home and cried at one time. I resented him, because he was rude. He said to me one day: “We need you on line 1”, and then he said he hates to send me over there because that team will have overtime. By the end of the day, he told them: “You can keep her. She is useless anyway”. I tried to look like I was OK, but I went home and cried the balls out of me. I was devastated. It did bother me because we were right on time, and I worked as hard as anybody here. My problem is that I do not act like being into them (team leaders). It would have been an easier way if I flirted with him, showing to him that he is the man...

A black male group leader describes how he solved a heated argument between a male and female team member in her group. The incident again involved team members dealing with an ugly break-up, which could have easily degenerated into a case of sexual harassment:

> There are women there that are well endowed, you know? Therefore, as a group leader, I make sure I look everybody in the eye. I am not interested in anything below your neck. I have to enforce dressing codes, make sure they do not have tops too loose, too revealing. Sometimes they might need a definition. One of my male team members made a negative comment about his colleague’s outfit (a female team member who is extremely well-endowed), that she is exposing too much. She was in tears because somebody judged her on anything other than her work ethic, and it hurt her. Actually she was going thru an ugly break-up and her boyfriend said: “What are trying to do? Are you putting everything out there?”. It was a 99 degrees that day and she just dressed comfortably for a hot day at work. I understood her because I also have daughters. I asked myself: “If this is my daughter, what would I do?”. So,

> I walked up to my locker and gave her one of my extra T-shirts. I did not say anything to her and just left the room, walked away. She brought back the T-shirt, washed, ironed, folded, and put in on my desk the next day. She said: "Thank you for the T-shirt!", and I said: "I don't know what you are talking about".

As we can see, group leaders and team leaders, who are constantly under the pressure of just-in-time production, have also to know how to properly manage the challenges of working with a diverse workforce. I found extremely interesting that Kaizen is trying to solve these kinds of tensions across the gender lines by cultivating the idea that the team is a family. Kaizen full-time members have to watch annually an anti-harassment video that is showed in the cafeteria during the lunch break. It is also mandatory for all the temporary workers to watch this video before they sign their contracts with the temporary staff agencies. Sexual harassment is defined as uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature especially by a person in authority towards a subordinate (Webster Dictionary). Sexual harassment lawsuits are surrounded of so much controversy because sometimes there are blurry divisions between what is considerate appropriate and inappropriate behavior at work. Therefore, Kaizen Motors conveys in these anti-harassment videos a very clear and instrumental message to their workers: "Do not say anything to your colleague which you wouldn't say to your mother or grandmother!". The message basically encourages team members to have very close interpersonal relationships with one another, but workers should not venture into risky territories. They should play the same roles they practiced during the socialization in their early childhood.

Redefining femininity and masculinity on the line

Are these female team members superwomen? A male worker considered that "it has to take a special woman to incorporate herself in this male environment". Although both female and male workers agree that strength is only one aspect of successful performance on the line, as a sociologist, I was surprised to see that a female worker praised the good work of another female colleague with the label "you are a he woman". She obviously internalized the norms and gender roles of a society that associates only masculinity with power and strength. Other women tried to demystify

their aura of special women: “If I can do it, anybody can do it. You just have to be patient. This is not for superwomen”.

Talking to these women I was very careful to look for signs of early aging or masculinity driven from practicing an traditional masculine job. These women do not expose male characteristics, masculine attitudes or gestures. They are far from showing off their muscles as Rosie the Riveter in the World War II poster, and are closer to the fragility of Norma Rae (played by Sally Field in the movie with the same name). The tough screening process the workers have to go thru before they are hired takes a long time, and during this time, recruiters have the chance to observe the pool of applicants in numerous occasions. Hiring at the Kaizen plant is a very selective process (a worker said that when he was hired, he was a member of a 20 workers cohort selected from a pool of more than 4,000 applicants). So, if we take into consideration that these workers are the cream of the crop, than it is safe to say that these women and men are special workers. They are very professional, intelligent, and physically attractive, have excellent social and communication skills, and exude dynamism, enthusiasm and femininity. They are smaller frame, petite and slim women, who are very careful about their physical appearance. They wear nice and sometimes sexy T-shirts and camisoles and sometimes big earrings, although they were told earrings are safety hazards. Many of them put make-up on every single day at work and have wonderful polished nails. Few of them feel that it is necessary to pull their hair in the back, and wear fashionable haircuts instead. Make-up makes them feel better about themselves and gives them more confidence. I wondered how they can keep their long nails clean and intact, and some of them tell me that they cannot even work without the nails, because it protects the top of their fingers, and that they never break a nail! All this shows that they do not neglect their feminine side and is possibly a sign that they enjoy the attention and their privileged status of being among the few women on the plant. Carey says:

> I want to be a woman, a pretty tough one, and they (men) let me be one too. I don’t have to act like a man. I always wear make-up. It is my ritual, my vanity issue. I get a lot of attention, but I just smile and say: “Thanks”.

Gladys, a thirty eight years old extremely attractive woman with gorgeous hair, is the only woman who confessed that it is hard for her to preserve her femininity on the line:

> I don't want to do this for the rest of my life. Sometimes you feel that you are not very womannie -womannie, you know what I am saying. It is hard to be girly here.

Toyota women in their homeland still assume the servant role of office ladies and are not assigned important jobs according to their credentials. During his 3 years of participant observation at Nizumi plant in Japan, Mehri (2005) noticed that Toyota women have a double mandate: they are supposed to do the job as well as men and they are supposed to display their femininity. "Being the flower of the shop" meant that the assembly line should try hard to look attractive, popular, sensitive, interested in homemaking, religion and the traditional Japanese customs.

The visible display of femininity seems to be an important element of life in predominantly male settings. Women recruits in the Marine Corps are required to wear make-up, long hair arranged in an "attractive, feminine way" and skirt uniforms. They are also discouraged to act macho, but to act more like "ladies", so they are encouraged to expose their femininity in a more strident way. Williams (1989) explains that this type of femininity display in male dominated occupations reflects men's insecurity about their own gender identity. Williams' study about the early inclusion of women in the Marine Corps showed that when men see women accomplishing tasks that they regard as masculine, their own masculinity is threatened. However, this situation is not accurate anymore at Kaizen Motors, mostly because men and women spent almost 20 years working side by side in this non-traditional field.

"Don't Get your Honey Where's Your Money": Dating and the Soap Opera of Teams

A recent study about work relations on Toyota's homeland reveals that the company still does not have any restrictions on co-workers dating, and continue the practice of gokon, which is a modified version of arranged meeting at work (Mehri, 2005). Dating was also a major recurring theme that emerged from the discussions on

intra-team relationships between men and women at the Kaizen plant in the US. One of my female interviewees talked about dating as about a general, acknowledged, undisputable reality on the plant:

> You know what they say around about Kaizen… The rumors that go around are about family disruptions. It is because we spend so much time here.

The company has a formal policy on dating stipulating that married couples cannot work together in the same team. In most of the cases, the husband or the wife is assigned to other departments or stations. However, the workers agreed that most of the romances or affairs in teams do not work out on a long-term leading to uncomfortable situations when someone has to work side by side with an "ex" every day when he or she comes to work. Although both male and female team members agree that dating at work is counterproductive, they think that dating at work is unavoidable. A female team member said:

> I spend more time here than with my family. If you think about it, it is so naturally that you are going to have some attractions. You are looking at the same Joe every year, he is starting to look hot to you, but people should handle it responsibly!.

Another female worker explained:

> Dating is going to happen here more often than in any other workplace. We are here since early in the morning till late in the afternoon, and when we go home there's so much to do just to catch up. If I was single, I wouldn't have the energy to attempt to go out and date. There is always going to be a little of dating when men and women work together. Nobody said anything to me that's been crazy like: "Man, did I just hear that?" I have a good sense of humor. There is always a playful interaction, and you have to laugh along with it. Some people like to run to HR and report everything. There is a difference between harassment and just fun.

The concept of "playful interaction" describes that there should be a chemistry between the men and women of the team. Other team members appreciate that it is more fun when you have women in the group because there is more "innocent flirting" and "silly stuff" For most of the assembly-line workers, these playful interactions and innocent flirting must be ways to escape a tiresome and dangerous job.

An extremely attractive forty years old single mother tells about her experience as a woman in the factory:

> Lord, it helps being attractive. People trying to get a date with you, it happens all the time. If somebody is married and disrespectful and making obvious advances, you have to cool it down. You ask how is the family, how is the wife, you let them know where you stand… I am a happy single and I do not mess with married men.

A female team leader followed up with the same idea:

> Affairs…that goes quite a bit here. Management does not encourage it, but looks the other way. They need to do a study on what the divorce rate is here. I would like to see that. All the women on my team are divorced or single mothers.

It is very interesting that workers predominantly used the word "affair" and not "romance", implying that most of the love stories than happen at work are between married workers. A male team member was also troubled by the high rate of divorce. He estimated that there are a lot more divorces than marriages in his group and that in the 10 years he spent working in his team, 8 out of 10 colleagues divorced.

> This is a crazy place, men do trade-offs with women for heart issues. This is high-school magnified a hundred percent. There is a lot of dating, jealousy, people switching wives sometimes. People do it all the time. I wouldn't marry somebody here. My wife works first shift, and we see each other over the weekend. Divorce rate is so bad because people do not try enough to save their marriages.

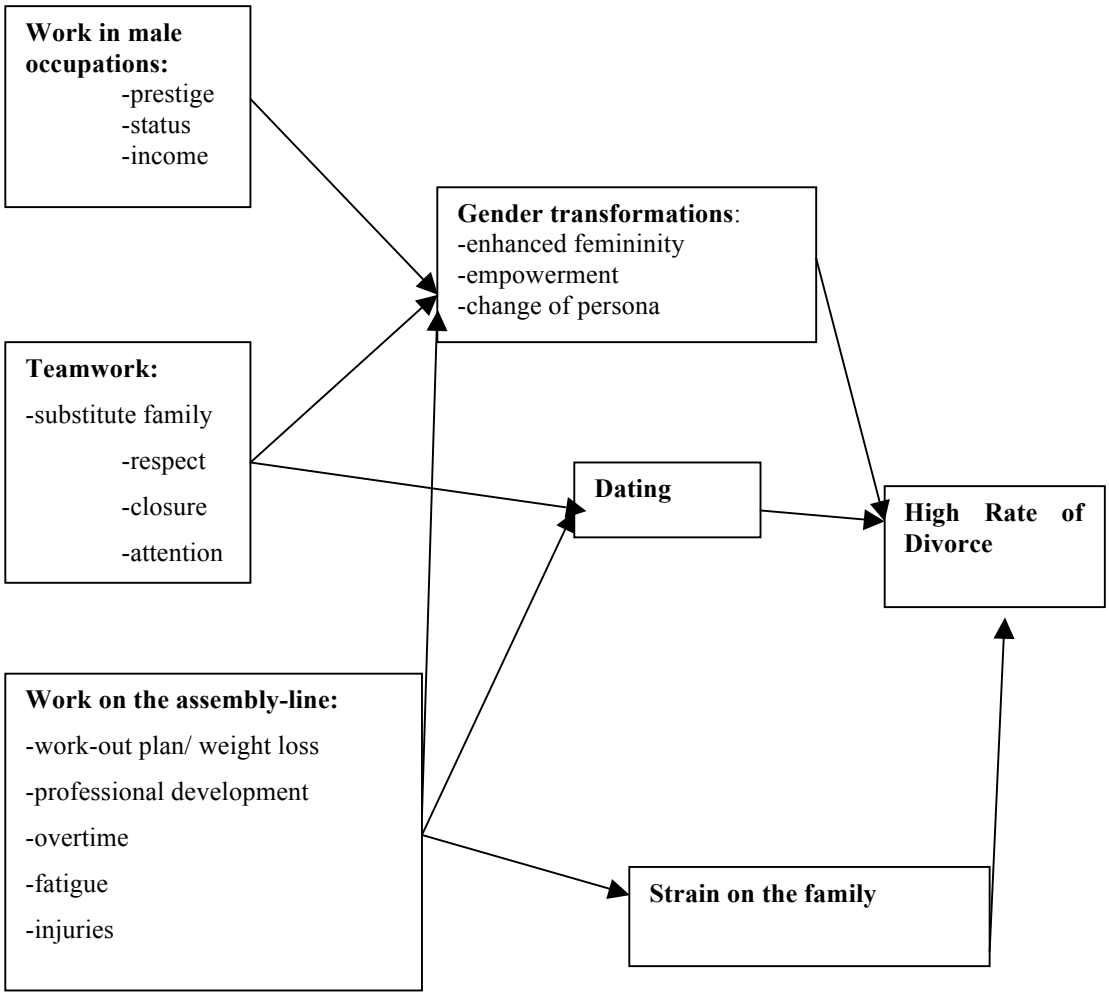
Hochschild (1997) pointed out how shift work can lead to broken marriages, assembly lines having their own "marriage busters", women who seduce their co-workers as a source of entertainment. Men, on the other side, confirmed that dating is a common event on the line. One of them says:

> I wouldn't marry somebody here, because I am a very protective person, and men are pigs. They hit on any woman walks thru. There's a guy on my group that knows every single woman on this plant. It's an assembly thing. Guys turn into dogs even though they are 50. It's not as bad as it used to be because they can get fired now.

A male group leader mentioned also that his biggest concern on the job is the flirting and dating going on the line, which he called "interpersonal intermingling".

As a group leader, he feels that it is very important not to show favoritism to attractive women, because on this line of work, team members might touch each other by mistake when they put in body parts.

Figure 2: Work related factors that impact family



Work on the line can be detrimental particularly to couples who work in opposite shifts. Some of the workers said that there are days when they do not get to see their spouses at all, but they try to compensate by calling each other during the breaks. The night shift seems to have its own different pace, rules and culture:

> We are living in a totally diff time zone. The world is a lot smaller in the night shift. If you have a first shift person at home, and you work in a different time zone, the companionship is not there. You meet only over

> the weekend, and we have to work Saturdays now. You have to work harder to make your relationship work and nowadays people don't do this.

Only one female worker said that working in an opposite shift with her husband helps their family, because there is always an adult at home to take care of their four children, especially if a child is sick. Although you would expect that the divorce rate is higher in the second shift than in the first shift, we should keep in mind that night shift workers are very young and still in the early stages of their relationships. It is more likely for first shift workers to be at their second and possibly third marriage. A female worker describes the story of her divorce:

> My ex-husband worked here, and I thought it was a good opportunity for me, too. We had problems in the past and it intensified here. He was very jealous. Any break or lunch he had to be with me. I felt like I wasn't trusted. You put a lot of people together and this is what happens. People say things to you all the time, but they do not say tacky things. People say that I am attractive. People stop and talk to me all the time. I can't stop it. I wouldn't date again somebody here, because people are jealous. Divorce rate here is very bad.

For other women, having this kind of job help them to leave bad or abusive relationships:

> I was married for ten years, and wanted to be in a position to take care of me and my kids to get out of a really bad marriage relationship. Kaizen gave me the means to take care of my family. I divorced soon after I came here.

At the same time, assembly-line romances work well for others. Especially for the young workers in the night shift, marrying somebody from the same group works great because it is hard to date somebody from outside the plant at those "weird" hours, as they call them. Couples are protected from breaking up if they are not poisoned by the jealousy factor, especially since this is a working environment where men and women might work closely side by side, shoulder to shoulder, and might even touch each other unintentionally during the production process. When the marriage works out, people can see clearly the advantages of marrying one of their co-workers. Work at such an intensified pace is very demanding on workers' bodies and minds. If they marry a co-

worker, they earn not only a spouse, but also a supporter that understands completely the hard work they have to put up everyday. A female worker realized that:

> It helps to have my husband here. I never understood the aches and pains. Now I see it and feel it by myself. I know how it is to work here and how you interact with people all day long. I can understand that he has to talk to other women, and I understand as long as I do not see him doing it.

However, if both husband and wife do assembly-line work, they will be as beat up when they come home. If both of them are physically and mentally tired and have new duties to take care at home, tensions and conflicts are more likely to break up. To the other extreme, having a spouse who does not work at the plant and who has no idea about the nature of assembly-line work might create a rupture inside the couple on a long run. A woman explained:

> My husband gets a little fussy because I get sore. My body hurts, and he thinks I am lazy when I cannot do all the chores around the house.

The same story is told by a male worker:

> I've been thru a divorce. I worked in here 12-14 hours and I would go home and still do groceries, bills, cook, clean. My wife was a stand-at-home wife and did no understand how tired I am. Many people here marry each other after working together for so many years. It's because they understand each other and know what are they going thru. We spend more time here than at home with our families. In any situation where you have a lot of men and women working together, at hours when they cannot be at home with their families, it will be a bad divorce rate. My sister tells me it's the same in the school system…

The only couple included in my sample remarried after seven years of working in the same group and two and a half years of dating. As soon as they got married, their group leader contacted HR to move one of them to another group. The couple agrees with the move, because, they say, working side by side does not work for them:

> We spend too much time together. We are together 24/7/356. She has issues with me because I do not have anything to talk to her, but I talk with others every time. She gets aggravated about that. When I worked first shift, I was a lot more anxious to call her and waiting for her phone calls. I couldn't get enough of her. That's probably a bad thing for

> working with women. We work around them so much, and we get attached to them, and that's what starts affairs.

The team members do not mind to have a couple working in the same group if there is no sexual content in their daily interactions. In other words, the couple earns the respect of the team if they behave professionally at work with no emotional displays of hugging and kissing. Team leaders also face the challenge of having to lead such complicate intricacies of relationships and have to be very careful not to give special privileges to the couple (to pair them together on jobs).

Another lady is very proud that although her husband does not work at the plant, he understands how hard this work is. She calls him "her best support system" and says that although she has four children of different ages, she has perfect attendance only because he is so helpful and understanding about her work. This night shift worker realized that she is not motivated enough to work out at the gym during the day (after 2 pm when she wakes up), so her husband, who works first shift, wakes up at 2 am to pick her up from the night shift, and they go together to the gym and work out till 3,30 am.

Men and Women at Work and Their Families

One of the leading sources of dissatisfaction at the plant is the lack of time to be dedicated to family. Although the company is interested in ensuring a balance between work and family, 38% disagree and 43% agree that they are able to maintain a balance between their work and personal lives (Kaizen Motors opinion survey, 2005). It is interesting to see how the female workers manage to balance their lives and handle their busy schedules.

Linda was pregnant with all of her three kids while she was working on the line. The company policy for pregnant workers is that they can work on the line up to 28 weeks and then, they will be assigned to an office work. Because Linda had complications with her second pregnancy, her doctor recommended her to rest more, so she went on medical leave when she was only two months pregnant. Her female team leader explains me that they try to help pregnant women if they are nauseous on the line. I asked her then if men become frustrated or impatient when their female colleagues have

morning sickness or heavy bellies and maybe cannot perform to their full ability. She answered to me laughing:

> But that happens with men, too. Some days they might not feel good, too, if they have a flue or something. Then, the whole team works well together. They did not complain when Linda got pregnant the third time. They just said: "Here we go again"!"

Another female co-worker tells all about her experience of being pregnant and working on the line:

> It was difficult when I got pregnant. You get very tired, more than normal, but I was in my early forties. They let me have ginger ale to cut the morning sickness, and I sucked up little candies. You can go to alter work duty if you want to. You don't have to stay on line if you don't want to. I went to alter duty work when I was six moths pregnant, I video taped some processes and did paperwork, and then I joined a safety group. I worked till I was two more months to go. I was standing on my feet all day, with all the added weight. The noise factor is at high level here, and I was worried of all the chemicals here, too. I was paid for family medical leave and stayed home till I had the baby. It's very hard to adjust when you come back. You have only one week, when you work one hour on and one hour off, and your body hurts. It's like you start it from the very beginning. I came here sometimes only after two hours of sleep if the baby did not sleep thru the night. Linda also had all her three babies when she was here. We were joking that we will deliver her children right here on the line.

Kim also recalled the time when she was pregnant and working on the line. She applied for a job as soon as she graduated from high-school, but the hiring process lasted 2-3 years from the moment she sent her application to work at Kaizen Motors. When finally she got in, she was already pregnant, but that did not stop her from accepting the new job on the line. She recalls being extremely tired when she was pregnant with both of her children. On top of this, her position was on the trim line doing the coupes (that do not have a back door), and she had to climb in over the top of the door, but she did this till she was six months pregnant. She became more emotional because she could not see her husband much, since they worked in opposite shifts. Work on the line, however, was useful for women who wanted to get rid of the baby fat after they came back from the maternity leave. Kim's body adjusted very quickly to the

physical work. Although she gained 42 pounds with the baby, she came back to size 8 very quickly.

The relationships between the team members and their children are also a very delicate subject, because team members do not get to spend more than 2-3 hours awake at home. Sometimes it is even less than this, if they commute to and from the plant for 1-2 hours.

A first shift mother describes how she arranges her toddler son's schedule around her own schedule:

> My son goes to daycare here on-site. I like that he does not watch TV and has a regular routine there. We wake up at 4 am and get lunch done before coming here. Then, I get him dressed and brush his teeth while he still sleeps. He continues to sleep in the car, and we drop him off at daycare at 5,30 am, where they let him sleep till 7 am. Then they eat breakfast and all that.

The situation is even more difficult for parents who work in the night shift, thus having a conflictual schedule with their children who go to school in the morning. A night shift mother has to deal with even more complicated life arrangements:

> I meet with the children only for a half of hour when they got out of the bus, because then I have to hurry to go to work. I wait for them in the mornings, and go to sleep after they are gone to school. I am a single mom and managed all by myself, but I had a sister that lived with us for two years. They could have gone in a lot of trouble, but they didn't. They were straight As students. They did not want to disappoint me, out of respect for me, I guess.

So, this woman comes back home tired from her night shift at 3,30 am. She does not go to bed and waits for children to wake up at 7 am, so she can steal another 30 minutes with them. It's a total of 60 minutes per day spent with the children, and during this time, the family has some meals together and maybe does homework together, if there is time left.

As a mother of a toddler child, I cannot imagine myself having to deal with this kind of tense schedules and I wonder if I managed not to reveal my compassion upon hearing such touching stories. However, none of these mothers showed any signs of bitterness or discontent in their facial expressions or emotions while they were telling me

their family stories. On contrary, they radiated optimism, dynamism and laughter around them. They did not dramatize much on this issue or pretend that they are superheroes facing hostilities and impossible demands in their lives. Their attitude could be mostly translated with the following words: "we are active women with active lives and we are proud that we can provide for our families. Life is life and we have to deal with it the best we can".

However, these tough schedules might work as a disincentive for night shift women to have children. Mary said:

> I admire the women that work here and have families. I respect people who do it, but work in the second shift is part of the decision not to remarry and have children. It will take me a decade to get in the first shift. We are told that we may even retire from the second shift.

Since the divorce rate is reported to be high at Kaizen Motors, when team members remarry, they are more likely to form larger families. Most of the team members included in my sample had between 2-4 children from different relationships. A female worker said that she now has seven children (three from her husband's first marriage, three from her first marriage, and one common child). The time pressure upon her to organize efficiently homeworks, lunches to pack, laundry, soccer games etc for seven kids before and after coming to work is obviously a lot higher. Most of the single mothers confessed that it would have been impossible for them to work at Kaizen Motors if they did not receive help from their families. When they go to work, their children are watched by a family member who moves in with them or spend their time with grandparents, if they live nearby. The blurring divisions between work and home of these families lead to a new phenomenon, the assembly line of childcare, meaning that children are sent from workstation to the next (aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, grandparents, Hochschild, 1997). The increased demands of high performance work systems can also drag workers in a third shift, an emotional shift, where you have to deal with family crises, neglected children, abuses and divorces (Hochschild, 1997)

Building on Simmel's theory of social interaction in groups, Kanter (1977) did groundbreaking research on the importance of numbers and ratios in the nature of social interactions. She analyzed the experiences of women sales managers in a large

industrial supply company who were in a token status, meaning that that their number was less than 15% of the entire group composition. Her research mainly emphasizes the psycho-social difficulties that members in the token status have to go through at the workplace. These difficulties range from fear of visibility, performance pressures, exaggeration of differences and dominant culture to role encapsulation and boundary heightening. Tokens also tend to isolate themselves and dissociate from one another because of the pressures that they experience from the dominant group, thus reinforcing the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of tokenism.

Kanter (1977) advocates outside interventions to break the cycles created by the social composition of group, and paved the road for a growing body of research on the significance of proportions in the social life of groups. Similar token experiences have been reported not only among women managers, but also among women police officers, coal miners, construction workers, firefighters, military cadets, and law students (McDonald et al., 2004). The experiences of token men in female occupations are completely different, with men being on a glass escalator of hiring and promotion (Williams, 1992). So, the status, privileges and roles of tokens are massively influenced by gender.

As discussed in chapter 2, Kanter's thesis finds that things are better for women when there are more women in the organization or work group. However, I have found that teams with low gender diversity function at their best. Contrary to Kanter's findings, our token women seem to enjoy their token status, and the esteem and special attention that come with it. Actually, Kanter points out that age and experience helps tokens make a satisfactory accommodation with their environments. She also mentions that if tokens manage these difficult situations and get into places that are normally exclusive to others of their kind, a potentially stress-producing situation can be transformed into an opportunity for higher self-esteem and ego enhancement (Kanter, 1977).

Conclusion

This chapter on women at Kaizen Motors has illustrated four major findings. First, women go through an identity transformation at Kaizen Motors. Because of their versatility and agility, they can handle the workload as good as men, and in general are

excellent employees. They have a sense of satisfaction and pride in their work higher than their male co-workers. Women at Kaizen feel empowered because of their weight loss, their high wages, the self-esteem that they receive resulting from doing well in a "man's world", and the respect and attention that they receive from their male co-workers.

Second, men prefer to work with women on their team, but they cite both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages are the chat and humor between men and women that alleviate the routine and boredom of assembly line work, as well as the family atmosphere that they bring in teams. The disadvantages are the trade-off of jobs, women's perceived less physical ability for overhead work, women's cumulative injuries that make them be on restriction more than men or that men have to watch their language around women etc.

Third, Kanter's theory about greater numbers of women producing a better environment is not supported. Thus, team chemistry did not seem to improve with more women on each team. Teams with no gender diversity (male teams) exposed more rivalry and competition, while teams with high gender diversity (female teams) had more interpersonal conflicts. Teams with low gender diversity (with only 1-2 women) exposed the highest satisfaction, women enjoying the respect and attention associated with their "queen of the team" status.

Fourth, successful teamwork leading to spectacular results (i.e., top quality and sales) and long hours in an intense environment create bonds between men and women that can lead to marital problems in their families. The empowerment of women, the overtime, the difficulty of maintaining a balance between family and work, the close interactions facilitated by teamwork can lead to a high rate of divorce on a long run. This is a disadvantage of teamwork never mentioned before in the literature on teams, and this longitudinal effect of teamwork was exposed in the study because the sample included teams with long tenure, sometimes more than a decade.

Chapter 5: Race and Teamwork

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the nature of interactions between team members of different races and ethnicities working together in production teams on the shop-floor. The study focuses on minority workers' experiences on the line, their contributions to the team efforts, and the perceptions of the white co-workers regarding what minority workers bring to the table in teams. In the end, this sociological analysis focuses on emotions generated by the racial interactions, identity transformation of Kaizen minorities and the significance of humor in the lives of teams.

Research on the relationship between race and team performance is limited. Many companies do not want to question the fact that racial diversity might not lead to increased performance, and if they are interested in finding more on this topic, they are not open to allowing independent researchers to study this potentially explosive issue. There are very few studies in the current literature on teams that approach the impact of race and ethnicity on team performance (Kirkman et al, 2004; Timmerman, 2000; Paletz et al, 2004), and most of the research compared African Americans and Whites. Timmerman (2000) found out that age diversity and racial diversity were negatively associated with the team performance of highly-interdependent teams (e.g. basketball) and had a null relationship in the case of low-interdependent teams (e.g. baseball). The few studies available on this topic reveal that demographic heterogeneity undermines the individual attachment to the group and increases turnover rate (Williams & O'Reilly 1998, Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992), leads to increased emotional conflicts in teams (Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin, 1999), and lower job satisfaction (Wharton, Rotolo & Bird, 2000).

It is also pointed out that racial diverse groups do not necessarily produce larger quantity of ideas, but they do provide ideas of better quality (McLeod & Lobel, 1996). A recent study observed that although the performance of white teams versus the ethnically diverse teams was equal, the diverse teams reported a more enjoyable working experience with more positive and fewer negative emotions (Paletz et al., 2004).This study, however, shows that racial diversity has a positive impact on team environment

and climate as racially diverse teams share a variety of stories and jokes that alleviate the boredom and routine of assembly line work.

Minorities at the Kaizen plant

Past research shows considerable racial segregation in organizational establishments in US. A black employee is more likely to work in an establishment with 35% or more black employees, with this percentage being higher in the small establishments. By contrast, the demographic composition of large companies tends to reflect the demographic composition of the society at around 10-15 percent (Sorensen, 2004). However, the Kaizen plant does not reflect the same demographic patterns: the demographic composition at Kaizen Motors is 21% female and 79% male, 12% racial minorities (1% of Asian of Japanese descent, 0.81 % of Hispanic descent and 10.19% African Americans). The total Hispanic population at the plant is 0.81% in the context in which Hispanics has become the largest minority in the US (13.7% of the total population)[7]. The Hispanic population at Kaizen is underrepresented because first of all, employment at the Kaizen plant is open only for permanent residents and citizens; second, some of them do not succeed in passing the hiring tests because of a poor mastery of English language. Most of Hispanic workers that work on the premises occupy custodial or contract jobs, which means that they are not Kaizen employees. Kaizen Motors does not sponsor work visas or green-cards, consequently closing the door to many diverse potential employees.

My sample included 87 team members: 74 Caucasian and 13 minority workers. The minority workers were composed of 11 African American workers (2 women and 9 men, representing 12,64% of the sample), one Hispanic male (he identified himself as being Hispanic, although in fact he was biracial and did not speak Spanish at all), and one Asian (Middle Eastern) male. It is interesting to note that out of the 11 African American workers, 3 had team leader positions and one had a group leader position.

A career at this top global company offers a unique exposure to diversity for the domestic workers. Team members recall that during their tenure at the Kaizen plant, they

[7] Statistical Abstract of the United States. 2005. Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census.

worked in the same team with workers from Puerto Rico, Indonesia, Albania, Korea, Palestine, Sudan, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine etc. The initial contact with the Japanese trainers exposed the American workers to different work habits, communication styles and work ethic. Then, the trips to Japan were a cultural experience that many of the domestic workers will never forget. In addition to the new skills and training that they received at the home company, the Caucasian workers had for the first time the chance to experience what it's like be a minority. These experiences are used as a starting point in their on-site diversity training, as male worker describes:

> When I went to Japan in 1989, the young people will talk to you, but the people in their 60s will not even talk to us and look at us. I was sitting in the subway, and a girl is looking at me. She is pointing at my eyes because they were green. This was the most bizarre feeling I ever had. In the plane in Tokyo, I was that much taller than everybody else. Our guys had scratches on their head because everything was so much shorter on the line in Japan

Racial interactions in teams

Almost all the team members interviewed expressed publicly that they embrace a color-blind perspective. For example, many of them insisted that they do not see color in the daily interactions with their colleagues: "I don't see him (my team mate) as a black man, I see him as Bryan". The white workers underlines that the minority workers are not different in any way than the rest of the workers. The same perspective is embraced by the minority workers themselves who claimed that if they are different than the other workers, it is because of their upbringing and educational background and not necessarily because of their race. I will include excerpts from workers' interviews to show the variations of this general theme of color-blindness in teams:

> Everybody is the same. You are here because you have to build that car. You don't really see color when the line is running. When the line is running, there's no diversity. Diversity is only when the line stops, and people breaks up in their little groups.

> They (minorities) are pretty much like everybody else. No unique contributions.

Workers were asked to recall their experiences when they worked in whole white teams versus their experience when they worked in racially mixed teams. They all said that there is no difference. Team members also said that it does not make any difference for them if they have a Caucasian or a minority group and team leader. This color-blind perspective seems to contradict the integration-and-learning assumptions of Ely and Thomas (2001) as white team members do not report any unique contributions that minority workers bring to the table, while the minority workers themselves confirm that they do not bring anything unique that a white worker does not bring to work. The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) is particularly helpful in explaining how the color-blind perspective is generated by groups. In one of the classical works of social psychology *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954) noticed that the level of prejudice between Caucasians and African Americans is significantly reduced through close contact between these two ethnic groups. However, the intergroup prejudice is reduced only under optimal conditions of group contact: 1. Close and frequent contact (e.g. residential or occupational contact, not causal contact); 2. Equal status of the members of the group; 3. Pursuit of common objectives; 4. Absence of competition between groups; 5. Authority supporting or enforcing the contact.

As one of the most enduring theories in social psychology, contact hypothesis is largely supported by the existing empirical research (Schiappa et al., 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), but it had its share of criticisms. This theory was blamed for analyzing primarily the contact between whites and blacks, while other racial groups are neglected, and for including subjects that have some contacts with other groups, whereas the most racially intolerant individuals do not engage in contact with other races at all (Powers & Ellison, 1995). However, the contact hypothesis assists us in explaining the color-blind attitude of teams, as Kaizen teamwork meets all the ideal conditions of intergroup prejudice reduction. First of all, teamwork allows diverse groups of workers to have a close and frequent contact with each other at work. Team members form a group of peers with equal status, who interact on a daily basis on a common project at work. The Kaizen ways does not stimulate competition between teams or groups, while the teamwork philosophy along with the ideals of inclusion, tolerance and respect for people are strongly enforced by Kaizen management.

The Kaizen plant teams are a superb example of the contact hypothesis in action. The longer team members work together, they develop a tight bond, a sort of brotherhood that over the years moves from the reduced prejudice stage to color-blindness. The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) does not dismiss our initial theoretical perspectives on diversity (Ely & Thomas, 2001), but it rather completes it. Ely and Thomas' study is a cross-sectional study of three different organizations and did not analyze the longitudinal effects of the integration-and-learning perspective of teams. The contact hypothesis informs Ely and Thomas (2001) that if all the above mentioned conditions of optimal contact are met, the integration-and-learning perspective of teams is gradually transforming over the years in a color-blind perspective.

The list of three perspectives on group cultural perspectives (integration-and-learning, access-and-legitimacy and discrimination-and-fairness) was generated (not tested) from workers working in various departments (which the authors called "work groups"), departments that do not expose the level of interdependence, synergy and intimacy that characterize the Kaizen teamwork. More than this, Ely and Thomas' sample was made of only a third of support staff and two thirds middle and senior managers. It is very likely that high representation of these managers in the sample altered the findings of the study in the sense that these managers were probably more aware of cultural and racial differences than assembly-line workers. Also, the integration-and-learning perspective was analyzed in the context of a law firm, which was a small, non-profit public-interest law firm whose mission is to represent the rights and well-being of economically disadvantaged women. The social mission of this organization to serve the rights of the disadvantaged stimulated the inclusion of the minority staff's perspectives in the core functions of the organizations. When we try to apply the integration-and-learning perspective to the field of manufacturing, we realize that the nature of assembly line work (standardized work by definition) and of teamwork leads to the leveling and assimilation of differences.

Despite all these limitations of the Ely and Thomas' study, the authors bring good evidence showing how the adoption of the discrimination-and-fairness perspective leads to a colorblind attitude from all the organizational employees, including people of color. The culture of this particular organization was lead by two leading

norms: conflict avoidance, especially with employees of color, and assimilation to the white cultural standard. However, this colorblind attitude is more a superficial or rhetorical attitude, since this consulting firm is ridden by racial tensions. Whites adopting this perspective were "afraid to recognize that there are differences in culture", and consequently, the minority workers typically did not express their cultural differences (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

However, the formation of the color-blind attitude is a lengthy process with a bifurcated path. Most of the white team members at the Kaizen plant have a rural background, whereas most of the minorities have a predominantly urban upbringing. Some Caucasian workers confessed that they come from families that used to hold negative prejudices against the people of color and that would not accept them bringing a husband or wife of a different color at home. Therefore, in the beginning, the white team members had to try hard to fight against their own prejudices. Their initial attitudes were of fear of a different other, and they gradually changed in acceptance and even attraction towards the different others:

> I am from a rural area, and it's a lot of discrimination toward women, gay people, black people over there… I have a farming background. My county had very few African Americans in it. It's not that I did not like them, but I was scared being around them. Right now I do not even think about it.

> My dad never liked black people. My uncle said: "You work at Kaizen after they (the Japanese) bombed us!" I said: "Dude…that was long time ago!"

> I am from the country side, pretty back woods. I never thought that I will consider a black man being attractive, but I met a guy on Power train who is perfect. He is beautiful, awesome. If he wasn't married, I would date him.

The racial dynamic of teamwork at the Kaizen plant shows interesting patterns. For many of the team members, work at the Kaizen plant is a diversity lesson in itself. Here people from across the whole state, of all colors, sexual orientations and ages work together in teams and groups. Team members came a long way from the state of fear of diversity to an attitude of color-blindness. The data show that even the minorities

that came into teams with a cultural centrist attitude end up being assimilated by the main culture. First shift teams with a longer longevity show a generalized attitude of color-blindness, as proven in the following interview excerpts:

> Some black people are very sensitive, hyper alert of being black, but after being here for a while, they don't care anymore. We've all been friends here for so long, it does not matter if somebody is black or not.
>
> I am looking at you like a person, not at your sex, race etc. I don't really care if somebody is a minority or not. If you are a good worker, I don't care how you look like. Our core group of people has been here nine- ten years. We've known each other very well. You know what to say and what you cannot say to make one mad. It's very cool that we get along so well.
>
> We are pretty much all the same, other than the color of the skin. I don't see anything, not one thing! I would rather see my children bringing home someone from another race that treats them well than from the same race that treats them bad.
>
> It's interesting. That's what kept me in the group for so long. They are so different, so many things to talk about. We have people from across the state of different colors and religions, and we come together so nicely, going to parties to each other places… It's strange that we actually like each other so much.

A team leader tries to explain the color-blind attitude of his team:

> It is easier to shy away than to talk about it (race or color). It is easier for us to pretend it does not exist. We also do it with age and gender. Of course that we see color… We just don't want to admit it.

However, the minority workers do not agree that their colleagues are color-blind. The innocent teasing about someone's race or culture is a proof that race and ethnicity is not an invisible dimension. An African American team leader tries to explain:

> It is not true that they do not see color. The first thing that you know about every person before if they are cute or ugly, women or men is the color of the skin. It is automatic, instinctive. This is our thought process, the way our society taught us. I like to look at a color quality society, not color blind society.

For African American workers, it was hard to name something unique or different that they bring to the table in their teams. African American workers could not think of something that they bring to a team that a white does not bring. If the colorblind

whites could be blamed for ignoring a central part of the identity of their team members of other races and ethnicities, the minority workers themselves seem to be adopting the same colorblind perspective, showing that teamwork indeed levels differences.

The color-blind attitude also contributes to the apparent disconnectedness of African American workers from each other. Minority workers said that they do not prefer and that it does not make any difference for them to have another member of the same race in their team. They also do not report that they develop friendships or socialize with members of the same race at work. The presence of this color-blind attitude among the minority workers is explained by Kanter (1977) as an effect of their token status. The enhancing of differences, visibility and tighten control from the majority leads people in the token status to not associate with similar others. Also, the research shows that underrepresented minorities exhibit less racial homophily than the members of the majority (Ibarra, 1995). Team members who had the chance to work with more African American workers in the same group or team noticed that the black workers tend to have more conflicts with one another than with the Caucasian colleagues. An African American worker said that he used to say "Hi" to other black workers at the plant, but he stopped after awhile because they did not reply back. Consequently, he stopped believing that he can develop friendships solely based on race. His current wisdom is that:

> Just because we have the same skin tone that does not mean that we have the same culture. Really we don't. We really don't. I never try to make this assumption.

A twenty one year old temp, originally from the Middle East, is described by his team members like somebody who "tries to fit in" and who "you can tell he wants to be one of the guys." Of course, this desire of fitting in is exacerbated by his temporary employment status, as we described in the previous chapter.

Among many other things, this Middle Eastern worker, who lived in the US since he was two years old, said that he does not feel different than any other member of his team, and that the only element of diversity he brings to the team is ethnic food. The Hispanic team leader confessed that he also feels that he does not bring anything unique to the group and that he blends in nicely with the group. His subordinates become aware of his Hispanic heritage only when he brought Mexican food to diversity lunches.

The diversity lunch where team members bring different ethnic food tot work is a very enjoyable activity for team members and one of the few diversity activities that they recalled during their interviews. Some team members mentioned that they have a Diversity Cookbook.

Language

Language emerged as a significant dimension of diversity in teams. First of all, we have to mention that there are no major language barriers in the Kaizen teams since employment at the Kaizen plant is available only for citizens and permanent residents in the US. Therefore, this is a workplace with an almost non-existent Hispanic workforce. Team members (including the Hispanic team leader) considered that Hispanics would have a hard time passing the hiring tests because of their language barriers. However, the outside contractors and the suppliers with whom the Kaizen workers interact on a daily basis have a larger Hispanic workforce.

One of the foreign-born interviewees from my sample said that she could not pass the initial hiring tests although she lived in the country more than fifteen years. Intuitively, she thought that she might improve her English if she goes to college. After she took her Associate Degree, she was able to pass the tests and secure her employment at the plant. This story has its own wisdom. Since Hispanic workers are underrepresented at the plant (0.81%), Kaizen should take more actions to increase the numbers of Hispanics at the plant. The access of the Hispanic community to Kaizen plant will be considerably facilitate by the alternative of taking the hiring tests in Spanish.

One team recalled an instance when a Mexican temp joined their ranks. They got along very well with him because he was teaching the team members some Spanish, while the full-time workers taught him English. Other older team members recalled the early phase of the plant when the Japanese trainers came everyday on the shop floor. The American workers were almost nostalgic remembering how helpful the Japanese trainers were despite their language barriers.

Language is also mentioned in the interactions between Caucasian and African American team members. A white member preferred to have a black team leader because he speaks in a more informal way than his previous white leaders. However, an

African American group leader mentioned that he is conscientiously trying not to talk in African American slang with the other black members of his team as he wants to approach all his subordinates in the same way:

> I cannot treat my black team leaders with phrases that I do not use around other team leaders. How can I say: "What's up, big dog" when I talk to a female leader?

Joking

Joking is identified in this study as the most significant aspect of diversity. Humor and joking are major getaways from the monotony and tyranny of the line. Caucasian workers report that it is more interesting and pleasant to work in diverse teams than in homogenous teams. Joking also becomes the inclusion test for the new members as a team member put it:

> Joking is extremely important at work. We would loose our minds without it. You have to joke! I hated it the first time when nobody was joking with me. I hated walking in here everyday. Once you get people joking with you, it's a huge difference. Sometimes the older team members joke even more actually.

Thus, joking (including its more negative forms of teasing and hazing) becomes a ritual of inclusion and initiation that transforms the "different other" into a "generalized other." Joking is the first step and ultimate proof of the integration and adaptation of differences at the team level.

Diversity can also be considered a significant factor that contributes to workers' well-being, since humor and joking are used as a protective shield from the numbness and routine of the line. In an industry with a high rate of safety hazards and risks, situational and coping humor indirectly improves workers' morale, health and psychological well-being (Simon, 1990; Martin et al., 1993). Humor and laughter trigger our natural painkillers (endomorphins), which in turn help us to adapt to and to diffuse stressful situations and reactions (Berk, 1989; Weisenberg et al., 1995; Thorson & Powell, 1997; Parrish & Quinn, 1999; Garrick, 2006). Humor as a form of emotion work is often times mobilized in occupations with increased levels of emotional stress: soldiers (Le Naour, 2001), care givers (Parrish & Quinn, 1999), police officers (Martin, 1999) etc.

Thus, diversity sparkled humor can be used as a central stress coping and therapeutic strategy with a predicted positive effect on team performance.

Although an indispensable dimension of the life on the line, joking can become a double-edge sword when race and ethnicity comes under fire. Examples of jokes that involuntarily touch the race aspect are: jokes about workers' backgrounds (inner city boys versus country boys or hilly-billies), about food preferences (hamburgers versus fried chicken and neck-bones), about past careers, families and children, and even sports (e.g. African Americans being teased for playing golf).

In these situations, the cultural differences are very subtle. All the team members agreed that they know their colleagues for such a long time that nobody is offended when jokes touch the issues of race or culture. However, some Caucasian team members really worried about what the other races might think about their jokes. They wondered if these jokes are too sensitive for the minority workers, but they noticed that none of the facial expressions, gestures or behavior of the minority workers show that they are upset. Some team members decided to completely shy away from joking about race since they have no cues if the person who is the target of the joke feels uncomfortable or not.

When people recall their experiences with working side by side with foreign-born team members, they noticed that these workers "do not have the same sense of humor that Americans have" and sometimes do not understand the meaning of the jokes. However, workers do not understand that this is not a matter of having a good sense of humor or not, but it relates back to the language barrier. Foreign-born team members are also reported to be very sensitive about jokes about their country or cultures, and to take it very personally if they do not get the joke. For instance, the Middle Eastern worker was teased by his colleagues that they are going to call airport security and warn them that there is an Arab guy coming in. He replied laughing: "No bother, guys, airport security will stop me anyway!" In other groups, he was told to go back where he is from, or co-workers made fun of him that he is a camel-rider. He also laughed at it because he came to US when he was a toddler and never saw a camel in his entire life. He actually considers himself an American with an Arab name.

If the foreign-born seem to lack some sense of humor, the domestic minorities, mostly African Americans, are described most often as "hilarious," with "craziest sense of humor," "crazy people that are a lot of fun," or "the ones who crack jokes". Team members started to become more comfortable about joking about race after they noticed that the minority workers joke about their color themselves. Here are some examples of racial joking in teams:

> We had a diversity hat day. The whole thing is funny anyway, because we can wear only bobcats. We were talking about Mexican hats. At home I have a Robyn Hood costume, and I said: "Can we include hoods?" The group leader gave me those looks. It was so horrible. I felt so bad even myself. Thanks God, John knows me. He said: "I know what you meant, man!"

> When our team took a picture together, somebody said: "Make sure you use the flash for John!", and then I said: "John, you are that black spot in the corner with the white teeth". He laughs. He likes it. He thinks it's funny. He said: "That is the good-looking one over there!" We are all friends, and we feel comfortable with each other. It is not an issue. I've never been in a place like this. You walk out of here and it is totally different. Race starts to be a problem. Here people are persons, not black guys or Hispanics.

When I talked to John about this incident, he says that he remembers the joke:

> I might smile, and I am coming back and say something to you. It is no biggie to me. I am not ashamed of what color I am.

As we can see John was the target of at least two racial jokes, which apparently contradict the colorblind attitude. The big question is: Is racial humor an integration and adaptation strategy (Ely & Thomas, 2001) or a social and psychological distancing technique from workers of different races? There are two major scenarios that explain why the minority workers are not offended by the racial jokes, and even encourage them. The integration and adaptation scenario uses the assumption that humor is an integration technique. In our case, the minority workers are not only integrated, but also assimilated to the team culture. Minority workers adopt a color-blind perspective and are not offended by the racial jokes, because they do not see themselves as black men or

women, only as team members. The symbolic interactionist scenario would explain that teams have their own feeling and emotion rules (Hochschild, 1979), meaning that team members should be collegial and not get offended, even when humor touches the hot topic of race. Thus, the defensive attitude to joking has become an informal group norm. Symbolic interactionist theory emphasizes the importance of meanings associated with the social interactions. Is the meaning of racial jokes in this case a cohesive or divisive agent of teams? I incline to believe the first.

Joking on gender, age, race or sexual orientations reveals an awareness of differences or different generalized others. As a central dimension of team and group interactions, humor triggers in these circumstances mostly positive emotions. This is another example that dethrones the concepts of shame, embarrassment and stigma as the master emotions of social interactions. Joking in teams is most often associated in these interviews with feeling comfortable, and having fun together than with embarrassment, fear, anger or resentment. Joking and humor in teams was not included in the initial investigation, but it was identified by team members as a fundamental dimension of work in a team. However, these interviews cannot be conclusive on the nature of racial jokes in groups. Further investigation is needed to conclude how racial joking coexist with a presumably color-blind perspective, how comfortable minorities are with racial joking, as well as to what extent minorities initiate similar forms of teasing with their Caucasian co-workers.

Favoritism

A small number of workers reported that there is favoritism for workers of color at the plant. Both Caucasian and minority workers prove in this context that they misunderstand and misinterpret the principles of affirmative action, equal employment and diversity at work. Some of them suspected that the company has to meet a certain quota of minorities at the plant, but they blame the government rather than the company for this situation. Some white team members consider that minority workers can pass the employment tests easier than the Caucasian workers, because they receive extra points solely for their minority status. Other workers considered that if a black worker is in the position to be promoted, he or she would be picked over the white worker with the same record. One worker called this affirmative action policy a form of reverse discrimination,

while others called it being "politically correct." A worker recalls working with a black team member who made a lot of mistakes in his work, and at one point, when he drove the forklift, had an accident destroying $100,000 worth of parts. He was not reprimanded, and still drives the forklift, which the worker thinks would not have had happened if he was white. Favoritism is blamed again in the following case:

> It took me three years to move to the first shift. For a black guy it took three months to get here. Some people that were hired after me advanced quicker than me because of color. How could they do that? I have a technical background. They flipped burgers before they came in here. I just don't get it.

However, only very few white workers complained against favoritism in these interviews. The perception from these interviews is that the African American workers might be on a "glass escalator" at the Kaizen plant. Glass escalator as a an opposite concept of glass ceiling represents the structural advantages and privileges that some groups have in advancing their careers (Williams, 1992). However, this perception is not confirmed by the company data that show that only 10.68% of African Americans hold leadership positions. The mere presence of a minority person in a leadership position makes whites to ignore the possibility that they might not be qualified for a job or a promotion (Bonilla-Silva et al. 2004). Complaints against the affirmative action policies are common forms of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva et al, 2004). These new forms of covert racism or modern racism include surprise and envy on the minority success. Their complaints' against the promotion of minority workers is an example that a few whites are actually not ready to give up some feelings of white supremacy.

The minority workers do not embrace the same perception of favoritism. They believe that as minority workers they do not have more or less opportunities at Kaizen, but equal chances just like everybody else. Some Caucasian workers do not shy away from directly blaming minorities of preferential treatment as this African American worker recalls:

Some guys tell me: "You have to work hard to meet the quota (of blacks)". Quotas will not hurt. It is my benefit. I am not sure if the whites are not jealous [on the opportunities that we have].

Two-three Caucasian workers noticed instances when some minority workers use the race card to threaten the company with a racial discrimination lawsuit, if they are fired. In one instance, even when a black team leader recommended the firing of one of his black subordinates, that person still claimed that he was racially discriminated against. Some team members believe that HR is scared of reprimanding minority workers, even when they have good reasons like poor attendance or performance.

Workers believe that harassment in general (racial or sexual) is the easiest way of loosing employment at the Kaizen plant. Poor performance on the job does not carry such a harsh penalty as the racial harassment. Workers related an incident when some slurs were written on the walls in the bathroom, and the company immediately made some announcements that this type of behavior is not going to be tolerated.

Experiences of minority workers

Kaizen's annual opinion survey offered valuable quantitative data to back up the qualitative data obtained through the interviews. The annual opinion survey was filled by almost a half of Kaizen's total workforce, and helps us to draw a general picture of minority workers' experiences on the line. The final show that the Asian employees hold more favorable opinions about their work at Kaizen in general (they hold top management positions generally associated with higher job satisfaction). Another significant pattern is that African American workers record higher satisfaction scores than the Caucasian workers on all the survey items, which makes them the happiest racial group on the line. Hispanic employees score higher than the Caucasian workers only at specific items since their custodial positions at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy have lower status, opportunities for professional development and access to teamwork.

The following interviews shad some light on why the African American group is the most satisfied racial group at the Kaizen plant. First of all, African American workers feel that as a racial group, they have a deeper connection to teamwork. African American workers believe that cooperative work is an important part of the African American heritage. A black worker noticed that in the history of slavery, African American people had to work together, rely on each other, and make sacrifices for one another, thus having a historical connection to the principles of teamwork and inclusion.

A black team leader describes his experience of leading a team of white men. He was hired at the Kaizen plant at the age of twenty one, and promoted to the position of team leader two years later. Now, fifteen years later, he remembers how strict his leadership was in the beginning ("I had to be strict, not because I was black but because I was the youngest in the whole team"). He identifies so much with his work at the auto factory that his friends call him the "Kaizen man". However, he tries hard not to put on the "Kaizen" face when he comes to work and he wants to act the same way with his co-workers and his black friends. He feels proud and unique for being one of the few black leaders on the shop floor, therefore he makes conscious efforts not "to act white".

Despite the stereotype that minority leaders tend "to take care of their own", black workers feel that their black leaders are tougher on them because they do not want to show any form of favoritism. Therefore, the black team leaders are even more demanding with the black workers. In such an instance, Ely and Thomas (2001) used a plantation metaphor to explain the resentment against "the house niggers" that look after the "field niggers". In a quote that seems driven from Kanter's work on tokenism (1997), black workers experience tighter pressure and scrutiny from their black leaders for the mere fact that they are black:

> To a degree it hurts to have an African American team leader. He expects a little bit more from me. He feels that I should go 120% even in my bad days. He is a tough group leader, very direct and pushy, African American style.

A black team member tries to explain why he feels blessed for his job at the Kaizen plant:

> Kaizen presents a lot of opportunity for us. If you look at the outside world, African Americans do not have any opportunities. Coming here and making the same amount of money as the person next to you and being able to afford the things that you want for your family, you cannot be but happy. There are no other better employers in our state. I make a lot more than my other African American friends. They think I am the luckiest man in the world. You hear things here and there. "He is lazy because he is black". It upsets me, but it only makes me work harder.

A black group leader feels that he is envied by his black friends for his accomplishments at the Japanese company. Most of his friends work for one of the Big

Three American auto factories but despite the fact that they work in an environment with a higher percentage of minority workers, they would trade their jobs with the Japanese company at any time. The black leader said:

> My grandparents had seen people hanging from trees, parts cut up, public lynching at churches. These were my blood. It makes me appreciate what I have today. African Americans workers at the Kaizen plant can do everything they put their heart and soul to. We are the internal treasure that Kaizen has. These are the rules, this is the system and you have an equal shot to being promoted. African American workers are exactly where they choose to be. We all have the same opportunity to get promoted. Your gun has to be loaded and know what your focus is. There are people at (American auto company) who want to hire me every day. Why do I travel 160 miles every day for the last eleven years and do not work for them, where there are more black people? I worked thirty years and this is a company where for the first time in my life I like coming to work. When you come to this door, if you want to make a difference and be successful, you can. People do not understand that our African American culture says that I don't want you to give me anything. The number of Caucasians on welfare is double than blacks. That's what I teach my children: "Never ask for a handout, just give me a chance!" If I prove myself, I can smoke anybody. I burn them down the wall. There are companies with a good old-boy network, where you have to know somebody to get promoted, but Kaizen gave me a chance to prove myself.

The case of this African American team leader is a good example of the coexistence of multiple selves and multiple generalized others. He had developed a "double consciousness" (W. E. B. DuBois): his African American heritage encourages him to work for the American auto companies, which traditionally provided employment for the African American workers, but on the other hand, he has become "the Kaizen man" who internalized profoundly the Japanese culture and philosophy of work.

The community of fate of the Kaizen people is shown also outside of work, in the social geography of the company town. If employees used to come to work from traditionally white and black neighborhoods or white and black areas of the state, they live now in mixed neighborhoods. One of the black Kaizen workers said that he did not even look for houses in the black neighborhood when he decided to settle down in the company town. A Kaizen job brings considerable wealth to an African American family, so now the surrounding living communities do not distinguish themselves by race, but by economics. Thus, the melting pot at work generated a melting pot of races and ethnicities

living together in the same neighborhoods in the proximity of the plant. In few instances, some spouses of the Kaizen workers who were not exposed to diversity to the same extent do not want to leave the predominantly white regions and to relocate in the mixed neighborhoods in the company town. At least in one instance, a worker had to drive every day four hours (two hours back and forth) from his small town to the plant because his wife was afraid of living in mixed neighborhoods.

The oldest interviewee from my sample was a sixty one years old African American team leader. He started his career at the Kaizen plant at the age of forty nine, after he retired from the army. His story is also a touching story of hard work and success, and his destiny is now intertwined with the destiny of his company:

> Kaizen is a very good company to work for. I have been treated super. You wouldn't understand how it is to be on my side. When I got to school, I had to go cut firewood; I had to work all the time. Kaizen gave African Americans a better opportunity to reach a goal they never thought they will reach. They can buy a house… it brings wealth to the African American community. Kaizen gives minorities a chance, that's why they drive a hundred miles. When you start driving that far for a job with the price of gas today, don't tell me that person does not like the job! That speaks for itself. There are promotion opportunities for African Americans. All you have to do is to stay out of trouble, apply yourself, do what you need to do, and the opportunities are there. Myself with my age, I am a model.

A younger African American worker confirms this position with his own words:

> Kaizen took us away from the bad neighborhoods we were living in. It gave us a better outlook on life. Kaizen is not easy, but at the same time, it gives opportunities. A lot of people feel blessed and happy to have this good job.

Some workers believe that diversity is promoted by their company only for PR purposes or for pressure to conform to governmental regulations. Only one African American worker used the perfect attendance ceremony as a proof that diversity is a superficial concept at the Kaizen plant: all the groups that sang at the ceremony were country music groups, while only one group was geared towards the African American audience and there was no Hispanic band whatsoever (quotation from the interviews).

However, music is changed every two hours on the line in order to accommodate a diverse range of musical preferences.

Contributions of minorities

Minority workers bring to their teams different perspectives and view points, but most of all, different personal things to talk about which alleviate the boredom of the line. Minorities also bring different cultural backgrounds to their groups. Since the Hispanic minority was underrepresented in my sample, I can speak more about the African American workers and how they fit in their teams. African American workers bring a lot of laughter, humor, and relaxation, which are indispensable survival strategies of the work on the line:

> We talk, joke around. As an African American, I know how it feels to be down (especially for temps). The process temps have to go through is grueling, and working and not making the same pay. My contribution is to keep everybody's head up. Life is tough. I try to make everybody smile.

Team members' perception is that people of different races and ethnicities do not bring unique or different contributions to team performance (suggestions and problem-solving, quality, productivity and safety). However, minority workers have a positive effect on the team climate, which is an intermediary variable leading to team performance. Regarding the team climate, minority workers agreed that Kaizen is a great employer to work for, a workplace where they feel valued and respected by their co-workers and supervisors.

An African American female team leader thinks that her greatest contribution to her team is the chance to prove to people that African American women do not like to sit back and do nothing (e.g. living on welfare, her emphasis), but that they like to work when they are offered opportunities. All of her team members are extremely enthusiastic and supportive of their team leader:

> We love Tasha to death. She brings something because she is a bubbly person. She is the highlight of our team. She is energetic; she is laughing and talking, she is up-beat, always has something to say. She is not afraid to voice herself, which is good. She is fun to work with.

When team members share their experiences with working side by side with African American co-workers, their stories touch the same points: that the African American workers are happier, more relaxed, more talkative, more up-beat. Also, African American workers seem to be more open and supportive towards the newcomers of the group (including temps). Usually they are the first ones to approach the newcomers and to start joking with them, thus initiating them in the team spirit. However, all the stories involving African American workers revolve around the central aspect of humor, as in the following stories:

> Mark is funny. He dances, he is hilarious, he makes everybody laugh… In this kind of environment, you feed off of this. We are here stuck at night when everybody is sleeping. Oh, my Gosh, he makes you laugh! He is black, but lights up a room as soon as he gets in.
>
> African American workers have more humor. They cut up with you more. They crack me up, they pick at you. They made me feel more comfortable. They are the ones that will approach you faster than anybody and have conversation with you. They are the first ones who talked to me, they are more approachable.

Preference for diversity

Although we have no evidence to prove that the performance of diverse teams is higher than the performance of homogenous teams, work is reportedly a more enjoyable and pleasant experience overall in the high diversity teams. Thus, contrary to the previous findings on the potential conflicts that diversity brings to work, in this instance, diversity leads to a more positive team climate and strengthens the team spirit and morale, both of them being intermediate factors that ultimately lead to higher performance.

Our discussion on diversity comes as a full circle. In the beginning of their careers at the Kaizen plant, team members' attitudes towards diversity were influenced by their families and their backgrounds. After working for more then ten-twenty years at the Kaizen plant, workers take these enriching experiences on worlds' cultures, tolerance and understanding to their new families. The work experience at the Kaizen plant helps their employees to raise their families in a spirit of mutual understanding of different cultures and ethnicities. These well-rounded children will contribute to the social progress of our future society. Actually, in many stations throughout the plant, visitors

can see posters called the Diversity Garden. In the paper diversity trees, photos of workers' children are hanging on branches along with few words from children describing what they mean by diversity.

Conclusion

This chapter on race and ethnicity at Kaizen Motors has illustrated four major findings. First, most of the workers admired Kaizen for being one of the most diverse companies they have ever worked for and for providing employment opportunities for all the minorities. The minority groups (Asian, African American and Hispanic) are surprisingly more satisfied and appreciate their jobs at Kaizen somewhat more than the Caucasian workers. Kaizen teams adopt a colorblind attitude on racial differences that is better explained by the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) than by Ely and Thomas (2001). Teamwork offers the optimal conditions for the colorblind attitude to develop. Thus, the contact hypothesis informs the integration-and-learning perspective of the long-term consequences of a diverse workforce working together. Thus, the revised contact hypothesis appears to work.

Second, although the interviews did not reveal a direct link between race and key performance indicators (problem solving, quality, productivity and safety), racial diversity was discovered to have a positive impact on team climate. Racial and ethnic diversity leads to a more enjoyable and fun experience at work, which is a fundamental dimension of the life on the line.

Third, Kanter's theory about greater numbers of minorities producing a better environment is neither confirmed nor denied. Although the African Americans, the largest minority group, seem to be disconnected from each other, the interviews and the opinion survey reveal higher feelings of satisfaction and pride at work among these minority members than in the Caucasian workers.

Fourth, there are some complaints from few workers, involving favoritism for minorities, which is not confirmed however by the company data on promotions and leadership among the different minority groups. Only one African American worker recommended the company to promote more minority singers at the perfect attendance ceremonies.

Contrary to the past research showing the negative effects of racial diversity on team performance, this study emphasized the positive role of diversity in creating an uplifting team spirit. If we consider work groups as small units of observation for racial dynamics in the large society, we will see that homogenous societies lack the spice, variety, joy and fun brought in by diversity.

Chapter 6: Age and Teamwork

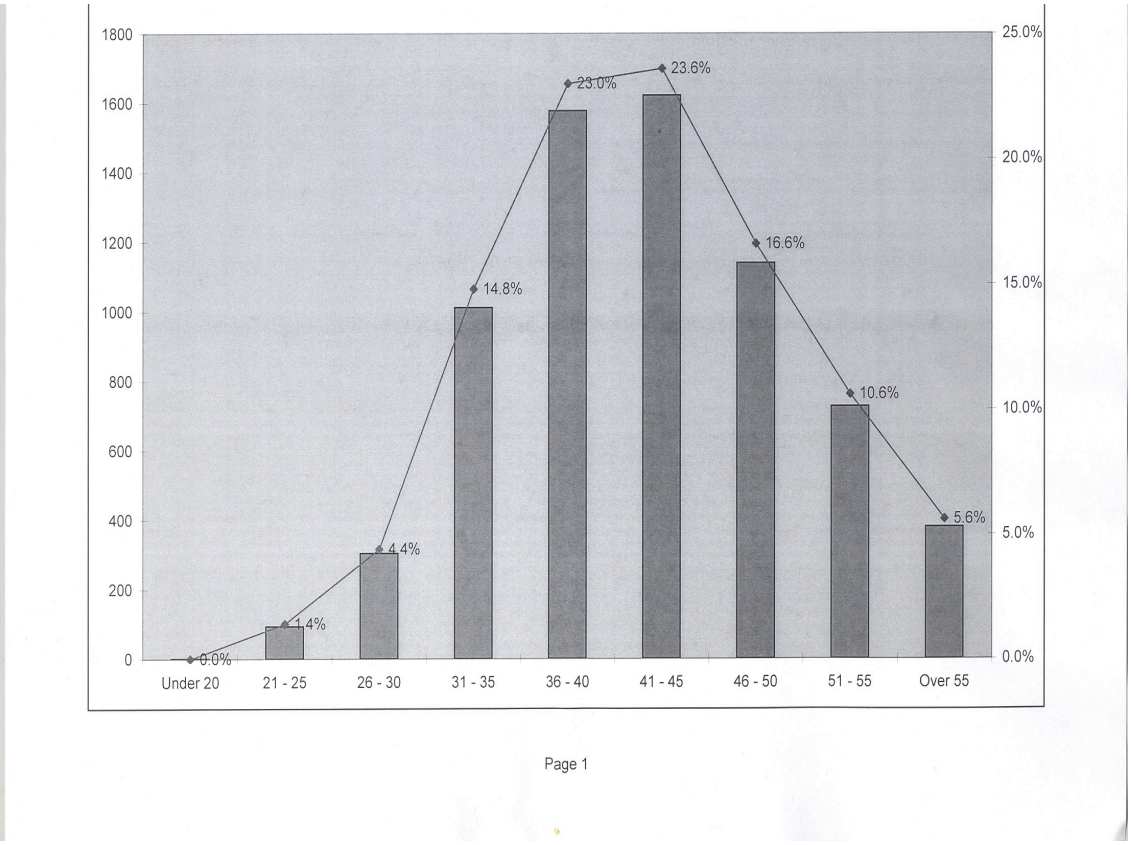
Most of the previous studies on the Japanese transplants at NUMMI in Fremont, CA (Adler, 1992), Mazda in Flat Rock, MI (Fucini & Fucini, 1995), Toyota in Georgetown, KY (Besser, 1996), Subaru-Isuzu in Indiana (Graham, 1997), Nissan in Sunderland, England (Garrahan & Stewart, 1992), two electronics transplants in UK (Delbridge, 1998) and a GM- Suzuki joint venture in Ontario, Canada (Rinehart, Huxley & Robertson, 1997) were studies about the early phases of lean production. Therefore, the link between age and lean systems is not extensively explored. It is a well-known fact that the US transplants of the top Japanese auto makers did not have any lay-offs in their almost twenty years of production, so how do the lean systems of production cope with the aging of their workforce?

In the case of physically demanding jobs, one may argue that age lessens the physical strength needed to perform these kinds of jobs. Younger workers expose on average higher levels of enthusiasm, energy, physical strength. Older workers expose higher levels of motivation and commitment, lower turnover, less absenteeism (Rhodes, 1983), and less adaptable to acquiring new skills and knowledge (Warr, 1995).Age explains little variance in the work performance of teams, partially because the potential negative impact of age is balanced by the potentially positive impact of work experience associated to age (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; McEvoy & Cascio, 1989; Waldman & Avolio, 1986).

The controversial issue of age is barely mentioned in only two of the early studies. At the Mazda plant, Fucini & Fucini (1995) noticed that work intensification leads to early signs of aging and early carpal tunnel symptoms, while a half of the CAMI workers anticipated that if they continue to do the overburdened jobs and to work in understaffed teams they will to be injured or worn out before retirement (Rinehart et al., 1997).

The Kaizen plant hired the majority of its workforce in the late 80s and early 90s. The following table of Kaizen's team member population by age shows that fifty percent of the team member population is concentrated in the 35-45 years old age segment:

Figure 3: Kaizen team member population by age, 2006.



My sample shows a similar age structure with a double number of workers younger than 35 years old in the second shift:

Table 2: Sample composition by age and shift

Age group	Shift 1	%	Shift 2	%
20-24 years old	0		4	9.1%
25-34 years old	9	20.9%	17	38.63%
35-44 years old	26	60.5%	16	36.36%
45-54 years old	7	16.3%	6	13.63%
Older than 55	1	2.3%	1	2.3%
Total	43	100%	44	100%

In this study, younger workers are defined as workers younger than 40 years old and the older workers are workers older than 40 years old. Although 40 years old is the cornerstone for middle age, we consider it old age for assembly line workers who usually develop early signs of aging and retire around the age of 50 years old.

Experiences of older workers in teams

Kaizen teams do not have high age diversity; they are not melting pots of grandparents and kids. On contrary, shift work split up Kaizen workforce in two different relatively homogenous age cohorts: first shift teams with average age of forty five years old, and second shift teams with an average age of thirty five (variation of ten years more or less). Both older and younger workers feel valued and respected in their teams regardless of their age. Older workers feel that the younger look up to them and to the leadership they can provide. Although younger workers do not have any open criticisms towards the older colleagues in their teams, they are very critical of the people who work in the first shift. First shift has a bad reputation of low performance which the younger blame on the careless attitude of workers with long tenure at the plant.

The experiences of older workers are dominated by a feeling of insecurity and incertitude regarding their future at the plant. Most of them could not predict how long they will be able to work at the plant, but all of them were hoping to retire from Kaizen. Older workers' stories gravitate around the main idea that old age and lean production fit together like oil and water, as in the following interview that describes what it's like to be an older worker and to work on the line at Kaizen:

> I hope to get some easier jobs. That's what everybody is hoping for. We do more movements in one day than most people do in a month, so we loose our elasticity in our joints on a long run. They take the easy jobs away. The group absorbs these jobs and it's a little bit faster and faster, and that adds up over the years. I don't know how long I can continue to work like that, if I will grow older here. I was talking to the other people and everybody is complaining about this. When is it going to be enough? When are they going to say that this is an honest day of work? Why should we kill our workforce? It is never enough. If we do 100%, next day we have to do 160 instead of 150 cars.

Workers who worked for more than ten years (some of them in their late thirties and early forties) on the line start complaining about the wear and tear on their bodies, wondering how much their body can take it. They say that it is extremely hard, if not impossible, to last on the line for more than twenty years. A forty-eight year old worker with only eight years on the line applied for a transfer in an off-line department for less pay only to make his body last longer. Even so, he seriously doubts that he could make his body last seven more years till he fulfills fifteen years of service and the age of fifty five.

Another interview supports the "lean and mean" hypothesis. Older workers describe the difficulty of coping with work intensification and the pain in their joints. Some of them are concerned that the lean line exposes workers to a higher risk of getting injured because they have to rotate the same jobs more often than they should (in some cases, team members have to do the same job four times instead of only once). A few of Kaizen workers praised the American auto companies, especially Ford, for taking better care of their older workers:

> A lot of us hope we can make it to the bell. Our jobs are tighter and tighter, faster and faster, harder and harder. We are making some jokes that (lean) is like they cut all the fat, but now it is like they cut all the meat and they are slicing it into the bone. We are wondering if our bodies can take it. There are a lot of people hurt over there. I could not even tighten my boots this morning. My hands pulled off. If you've been with Kaizen over ten years and you have not been seriously hurt, you're probably going to be. After fifty or sixty, your body does not recover so well from all the damage. Here is twice or three times harder than the plant I worked before. You reach fifty, your body wears out. I have so many injuries on my body I cannot count them. They run this place too lean. Every line is running bare bones, minimum, every man is overburden and everybody is stressed because manpower is so bad. They do not care if you are ninety out here. I don't like it. I hate to see me at fifty five working here.

A general idea that came out from the interviews with the older workers is that the overall society, but particularly such a successful company like Kaizen, should find better ways to protect the older workers, because, according to most workers, one cannot last on-line for more than twenty five years. A frequent suggestion is that the easier jobs (mostly the off-line jobs) should be based on seniority, thus geared towards

the senior workers. Older workers see themselves as the internal treasure of Kaizen, because they have accumulated an invaluable experience, whereas if Kaizen hires young workers, the company has to use more resources to train them.

None of the older workers I talked to had a clear plan for retirement or vision regarding their post-Kaizen careers. They just prayed to be able to work as long as possible at the plant. A fifty-five year old woman describes the dawn of her career after only twelve years as an assembly-line worker at the Kaizen plant. She describes the transitional jobs she took when she came back from restriction. Workers who come back from restriction go through two transitional weeks when they work one hour in and one hour off, then two hours in and two hours off. However, older workers bodies do not heal as fast and they end up going on the line hurting:

> I just came back from six months at 60% rate [restriction]. It was like heaven I hope to retire from here, but I don't see it. I try to go year by year; I take a day at a time. By the way, I am glad that this is on tape, maybe somebody will listen to this. My hands are ruined. I cannot even write a letter. I used to write letters to my mom. Now I go on the computer and do my bills on-line because I cannot even fill a check. I go month by month and year by year, and see how long I can make it. I do what I can to keep the speed, but not the quality. Team members in my team have to pick up my slack. I have to take pain medication. I take double dose at lunch time. I have good days and bad days.

Team leaders mention that sometimes younger workers feel frustrated when the older workers cannot keep up. They were "down" on this older woman because she could not finish in time a difficult door job, but the team leader defended her in front of the team and worked with her to get her back to speed. The team came up with improvements to accommodate her situation: a piece of equipment that carries the heavy parts for her to the next car. Ultimately, these types of improvements help all the team members to accomplish their tasks in a more comfortable way. Team leaders are portrayed as being more protective with the older workers. For instance, one of the team leaders said that he is constantly reminding the younger workers that they are going to be old one day:

> Older are much more detailed oriented, more nit-picking in a good way. Younger pick up on things a little faster. Older people can be limited physically; it takes longer to learn a job. Younger workers will ask

> me: “When will John or Helen get better on the job?” I just remind them that one day they will be on the same boat. Attitude makes up for lack of ability. If the attitude is there, the team members will understand. They will help each other out if you have good communication. As a team leader, you try to be as fair as you can.

The situation of the older workers is not much different in the context of the new reforms in the European auto industry. For instance, older workers, who account for 60% of the Peugeut workers, do not have access either to “easier” jobs since there is a drastic reduction of management position and offline jobs. Despite their general fatigue and resignation, older workers in the Peugeut neo-Fordist model still remain attached to the company because of its social life that is personally gratifying (Durand & Hatzfeld, 1999).

A sixty one years old African American man started his career on the Kaizen line at the age of forty nine, after twenty five years of service in the army. He is the oldest person in the entire shop, and has been the oldest in all the groups that he joined since he started to work at Kaizen, including the oldest person at the hiring tests. He never felt discriminated against because of his age and felt that he was given equal chances like everybody at the Kaizen plant. His military training helped him to be in a good physical and mental shape. A team leader now, Shawn is grateful for all the opportunities that he had at the Kaizen plant. He feels that it is a great honor and accomplishment for him to keep up with the younger workers in his team.

Another worker in his fifties has another touching story of fairness and inclusion. Three years ago he was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him with a blind eye and a skull fractured into a hundred places. Despite the fact that he was seriously incapacitated by this personal accident outside of work, the Kaizen family welcomed him back and tried to accommodate his special needs. After four months on medical leave, Kaizen sent him to a work conditioning program to get him physically in shape to work again, because muscles tend to get “flabby” on restriction. Another major readjustment for this worker was the transition from a binocular to a monocular vision, meaning that he had to learn how to do his job again and how do adjust his body to get the best vision with only one eye. He was only restricted from driving equipment on the plant, but other than that, he considered himself very fortunate and grateful that Kaizen

allowed him to come back on the line and to readjust to the pace of the line with no push or rush. This example contradicts the rumors that Kaizen will find any excuse to get rid of its older or injured workers.

Some first shift workers said that they deliberately slow down when they are on the line in order to make their bodies last longer. Most of the team members had the chance to replace temporarily colleagues from the opposite shift, and they noticed the different subculture of work in the first and second shift:

> On night shift, we run, run, run as fast as you can and go home. On first shift, you are going to be here anyway; the line is running; there's no point in hurting yourself; you cannot make the line run faster.

Although older workers have to live with this incertitude every day when they come to work, they still pray that their bodies last longer because they enjoy their outstanding wages and benefits at Kaizen. Many of them wish they could quit when their bodies are still strong, but said that they do not know how to cut back their lifestyle or to maintain the same lifestyle without having a job at Kaizen. Workers' children are also happy with the opportunity of working at the plant over the summer as seasonal workers, because they use the money to pay their college tuition.

Team leaders are patient with the beginner older workers who are slow learners, but want to be "superstars" from the first day, meaning that they want to prove themselves. Team leaders are particularly sensitive to the situation of older workers, calling them "the new wave of diversity that we are going to see in the workforce in the next ten years", a sign that the diversity training increased awareness on the aging of society. According to the team leaders, older workers, sometimes even in their late forties or early fifties, who decide to start a career on the line at Kaizen have the same chances, not better or worse than everybody's chances. In some instances, team leaders consider that middle age persons might still perform better on the line because they have a previous work experience that they can use at Kaizen and a stronger ethic than "an eighteen year old that never paid a bill." In one of the teams, two older temps in their fifties were trained by a permanent team member who was twenty five year old, but who worked for five years at the plant.

Experiences of younger workers in teams

The general perception of the workers I interviewed is that an average worker can work continuously in production for twenty years at Kaizen only if he starts very young (at the age of twenty) and moves to leadership positions or easier areas. However, the line makes sure that only the fittest youngsters survive for the long run. It is a well-known fact that the turnover rate of workers during their first months on the line is very high. The perception of older workers is that there are twenty and twenty-five year olds "dropping like flies", "who cannot do the work" and "whose bodies break down just as much."

Mazda workers show early signs of aging like small lines of fatigue gathered around the eyes and mouths that makes workers look old beyond their years. Also, the total wellness programs offered by the company were intended to bring the physical age down to the chronological age through fitness and other programs (Fucini & Fucini, 1990). At the Kaizen plant, first shift workers in their mid 30s called themselves "older workers" whereas second shift workers as early as 30s perceived themselves as being "older workers" showing how old age is socially constructed depending on the context and nature of work.

The experiences of younger workers who start their jobs at the plant are similar in the beginning with the experiences of temps. Actually the youngest workers on the line are usually the temps who are typically in their early 20s, whereas the youngest permanent team members are in their mid 20s. Many of them are drawn to the plant by the generous benefits and compensation, and worry less by their safety. However, the newcomers experience a cultural shock as well as a physical shock when they start working at the plant, as they get a lot of aches and pains in the shoulders, back, neck and hands as well as weight-loss. The newcomers are quiet and reserved for awhile until they get the acceptance of their group or "the good-to-go" stamp as they call it.

Occasionally, people who cannot participate in the temporary program are hired off-the-street, but there is a three- five years waiting time since the date of the application. There is a long waiting list, but applicants can call in and get updates on the position they are in. A young female worker considered herself very fortunate because she was one of the new twenty-five workers selected from a pool of 4800 applications.

The hiring tests lasted six to nine months. She had to pass three tests at every a couple of months each. The first test was computerized and included questions on attendance, people's attitudes, memory etc. The second test was the actual interview where she was asked how she handles different situations like dating and work ethic. The third test is the physical ability test. A twenty-three years old girl hired off-the-street describes the initiation period for newcomers:

> It was kind of scary because I knew how the temps are going to react knowing that I was hired off the street, but temps were nicer than the team members. Everybody who comes here is given a rough way to go. I probably had one easier because my husband worked here, and people knew who I was. I saw two guys who came here two weeks ago…they were giving a rough time, teasing on job performance. "He is never going to make it", they said. I feel really sorry for them. Guys get picked on more than the girls. Come on, you have to give them a chance! It's only their second week!

Teamwork gives younger workers the chance to see for themselves the challenges of growing older on the line. They can learn a lot from the experiences of older workers, especially how to preserve and to protect their bodies. Job enlargement is one of the anti-aging strategies that some of the younger workers use to slow the deterioration of their bodies. They learned the extra jobs on their own time, and went to the second shift to train in order not to leave a hole in their teams. These workers can now rotate not only the jobs in their teams, but also in their whole group. This self-imposed job enlargement did not only protect more their bodies from getting hurt, but it also alleviated the boredom of the line, as the younger workers could engage in conversation with and gain perspectives from more members of the large group.

The Toyota plant in Georgetown Kentucky has recently announced that it opens a pilot program to recruit high school grads in order to offset the attrition losses of its aging workforce[8]. This new hiring strategy seems a good idea because only an early start at the plant can ensure that workers are able to fulfill their twenty years of service for the company before retirement. An early start in this career could also help workers to

[8] Toyota Recruits High School Grads to Offset Attrition Losses, Lexington Herald-Leader, June 2006

start a second career after they retire from Toyota, whereas now it is very difficult for workers in their mid fifties to find good jobs. However, the Kaizen workers do not think that targeting high school graduates will work for their plant because high school students do not have the work ethic, dedication and maturity needed to be a good Kaizen worker. Older workers consider that the ideal Kaizen worker should be in their late 20s and early 30s, have some post-secondary education and previous work experience preferably in manufacturing that will help them appreciate more the opportunities that the Kaizen plant has to offer. David is very vocal in expressing his opinion about such programs:

> Hiring straight off high school is nuts. You should have a degree when you come in here. I don't like them going after kids, because they will be enchanted by the money. Younger are motivated by the monetary rewards, older by the long-term benefits. Older are better workers because they take pride in their work.

On the other hand, the younger workers consider that hiring older workers is also a risky strategy, because older workers are more exposed to injuries. The ideal worker is in the perception of the Kaizen workers, "not too young, not too old". Here's the perspective of a younger worker:

> They should try to hire young people, not to hire people in their fifties. I think that's just like asking for an injury. Eighteen is kind of young, I am not sure they are prepared for a career. A lot of people here are for the long-term, whereas eighteen year olds do not know what do with their life yet. They might quit after six months. The quality goes down but also safety. A twenty year old is not serious enough to work for such a company. He might be asking for a serious accident. At least give them two-three years out of high-school till get their feet under themselves.

Contributions of younger and older workers to the teams

The interviews show that the major contributions that older workers bring to their teams are the work ethic, stability, experience, patience, dependability and reliability (excellent attendance, which is extremely important), best trainers, better ideas (more thought through), wisdom, more detail-oriented, more interested in safety and quality. However, some of the negative comments about the older workers are that they are more set in their ways, and slow learners, but team leaders confirm that once they are trained,

older workers become good workers. Other perceptions about the older workers are that they complain more and are less satisfied with their jobs.

The major contributions that younger workers bring to their teams are energy, speed, new ideas, enthusiasm and excitement, vitality and creativity, willingness to learn, better eye-hand coordination, better dexterity, willingness to work harder and faster, more physical strength, more technologically-savvy, more interested in productivity, change and progress. Younger workers bring not only fresh ideas and perspectives to the team, but also energy and enthusiasm that awaken the teams. Their Gung Ho attitude, their up beat tempo, their jokes and humor, uplifts the spirit of teams. The vitality and excitement that young workers bring to work are fundamental aspects of the life on the second shift for instance where workers tend to feel drained, tired and dragging after 10 pm. Humor becomes again a central aspect in the environment of teams. One of the younger workers thinks that comedy is his unique contribution to the team:

> In my team I like to be silly. This is my gift to the group. I think this is very important, more important than making any car. I bring life, kid around and joke. I try to keep things upbeat; try to make them feel better. They love it!

Older workers are preferred in teams due to their technical superiority (the ability to make a hard job easier) and social skills (their maturity and wisdom leads to less conflicts in teams.) The older workers are also good trainers and disseminators of knowledge in teams. Sean, a thirty- nine year old worker, portrays the older workers as learning facilitators and pacifiers of teams:

> It is good to have older workers to work with the younger workers. It seasons them if you want. It helps them become more cured. I would work with older because they are more forgiving if you make a mistake. They are more apt to coach and to work with you, to help you learn. They are not in a hurry, you do not feel rushed. Even if we have a takt time, it's not a rushed, hurry atmosphere. The younger are more apt to make fun of you, to criticize you, to throw you under the bust than to try to help you work thru a process.

The overall preference is for mixed teams that include an equal number of younger and older workers. David's preference for mixed teams is embraced by the majority of workers that I interviewed:

> Honestly you need all of the age groups, including the ones that are close to retiring. They are doing a fantastic job too. If you start with the really young, you will have a lot of inexperienced workers. When I came here I was young and eager, tremendous speed, I could work forever. The older might not be so fast in endurance, but they have so much experience. The older guy on our team is very proficient. He is not the fastest, but he is the most level-headed. The younger are more argumentative. You need all of it. Young think that they are not getting hurt. Older bring the knowledge, the skills, the younger the get-go, the spunk, the willingness to perform great. We shouldn't loose that, so they can pass it to the young people. We are loosing a lot of knowledge after they will retire, you cannot totally replace them. There are so many things they learned after the years. It's going to be a challenge.

Suggestions. The majority of team members in both shifts agreed that the older workers bring more significant contributions to suggestions and problem-solving in their teams. Team members' perception is that although younger workers put out more ideas, the older bring better ideas. The older workers bring valuable experience to the table from their previous workplaces, as well as have more experience with the lean system of production. They understand more fully the logic of lean systems and the overall assembly of a car, whereas the younger workers are more intimidated by the whole production process in the beginning. Older workers are more concerned and are searching different ways to make their jobs easier because they know that they are there for the long run. However, they are not very open to the suggestions that come from their younger colleagues. Younger workers consider that the older workers are rather set up in their ways and resistant to change. Only the risks of getting hurt stimulate the older workers to search for better ways of accomplishing their jobs.

Productivity. Fifty percent of the team members interviewed consider that younger workers are more productive, whereas fifty percent considered that the productivity of younger and older workers is the same, otherwise older workers would lose their jobs.

Quality. The overwhelming majority of team members from both shifts confirmed that the older workers are more quality conscious, because they have more experience and have adopted the lean mentality (e.g. "Older people are more experienced. They tell the new people: "this is right, this is wrong."). . Few of the

interviewees believed that although older workers are more experienced with quality control, they have a laissez-faire attitude when it comes to defects:

> The older workers do not care much. They cannot be pushed as easily as the younger. Younger will do what they are asked to do in terms of quality. They are more obedient. It's a lot of wear and tear on my body over ten years. There's no incentive here to go above and beyond. I have seen people here making defects every day and they still get the same kind of money. The older are more concerned of their jobs, and if something is wrong, they will not tell necessarily to supervisor and hope inspection will not catch up. You have to respect yourself and set up higher standards.

Safety. The overwhelming majority of interviews showed that the older workers are the most safety conscious workers in teams. They are concerned with their personal safety because a lifetime of work on the line leads to injuries, aches and pains in their whole body (e.g. "We are realistic that we will not last forever. The younger don't realize long-term."). Older workers are equally concerned in the safety of their colleagues (a friendly pat on the shoulder when somebody is exposing himself to danger) and the safety of customers:

> Even if somebody will yell at me for stopping the line, that's fine. I will not let a car go out the door that will hurt anybody. People could get killed if you don't do something right. You have to remember that we have to do this right.

Gung Ho and Guru: Roles and interactions between the younger and older workers of the teams

The younger workers are often called the "Gung Ho" workers of the line. Although the expression sounds Japanese, it is in fact a Chinese word representing the communist industrial cooperatives where workers work together with a "spirit of teamwork, courage and wholehearted dedication" (Random House Dictionary, 1998). Adopted by the military, the expression is now used with a slightly derogatory and ironical connotation that shadows the meaning of teamwork and emphasizes an "offensively ardent, overly zealous and perfervid" attitude (Random House Dictionary, 1998).

Kaizen's Gung Ho workers expose a superman mentality and a macho attitude to work, are eager to move up and prove themselves. Kaizen's Gung Ho workers, eager to

put 150% in their work, pair nicely with the Gurus of the line, the older workers, who do not engage in futile movements and activities, think twice before they act, have a larger vision of their work and are interested in the well-being of others, not only in productivity.

Brian, a thirty-six year old second shift worker, is an overzealous Gung Ho. He loves his job a lot and is very excited by the numerous opportunities for promotion and professional development. Consequently, he takes advantage of all the opportunities that he has: he knows thirteen jobs instead of five. Although the second shift ends at 2,30 am, he stays at work till 5 am every day to participate in five different quality circles. Brian says that he feels tired in the morning, but that he still wants to challenge his brain, not only his hands and legs. One of his quality circles got him the Platinum medal and a 200 dollar prize, and now his circle is shooting for the one thousand dollars prize and the trip to Japan.

The older workers take the roles of Gurus or spiritual masters of the teams. Although they are not very strong physically, they compensate with their "mental experiences", as a team member put it. Gurus want to do their jobs better and smarter rather than harder and quicker. For the Gurus, safety comes first, if it is their personal safety or the safety of their team members, quality second, and productivity, third, which is in line with the Kaizen values and philosophy of production. Gurus are leaving their Gung Ho attitude aside after their long tenure at the Kaizen plant takes a toll on their bodies. From their role of spiritual masters of the teams, the older workers pass on advice that encourages safer behavior to their younger colleagues:

> The older bring a little bit more experience. They will say: "Hey, this is going to hurt you in about a year. You need to stop doing it. Slow down! You have all the life to do it!" They do not have the "go-getter" attitude.
>
> The older are smarter. They go around the block. The younger work the hardest way. The older will tell them: "What are you doing? There's an easier way to accomplish this". The experience steps in.
>
> The younger guys are more ambitious and love their job a little bit more. They want to try harder for awhile. After awhile, it fades away. The younger try harder for the company, which pushed the older to have to push. The older have more knowledge. When you are younger, you don't think that it is going to hurt you eventually. You say: "I can do it, I can do

> it!" Whereas when you are older, you say: "I can do it, but it can hurt me eventually". You are a better thinker as you get older.

Although the connection between teamwork and family has been a constant pattern throughout the study, the older workers tried to avoid taking the mother or the father figure in teams. They are not threatening or judgmental, and in most cases, pass advices only if they are asked, like the real Gurus. The Gung Ho workers might have a go-getter attitude, but they are more inconsistent in their work and also in their personal relationships with the other workers: they tend to "blow up" when they have conflicts with other team members or to have a "melt down" when they mess up three-five cars in a row, and people jam up trying to help them.

The Gung-Ho and the Guru are actually symbols of distinct generalized others. Gung-Ho is the "young other", whereas Guru is the "old other". Thus, these generalized others give to the individual his unity of self (Mead 1964, p. 154). The use of these labels (Gung-Ho is an in-vivo code, whereas Guru was generated from the data) by the team members show the ability to gain the perspective of the different other, which is so vital in the successful functioning of diverse teams.

Younger workers bring a fresh approach to work that helps the older workers feel younger. Younger and older workers sometimes socialize with each other outside of work, as in one instance one of the favorite pastimes for an Kaizen worker was to play golf with another team member, who was fifteen years younger.

Because the Kaizen teams are rather homogenous in terms of age, they become communities of fate where team members grow older together. The age homogeneity helps team members to get along well without major intergenerational conflicts. Usually first shift workers have even less conflicts with each other than second shift workers, because they are more mature and learned each other's hot buttons. There are more conflicts reported between first shift workers and second shift workers during their temporary assignments in the opposite shifts. A first shift worker reports that second shift workers are quicker to report them than to help.

Humor distinguishes itself again as the most fundamental dimension of interactions between younger and older workers. There is a certain teasing going on between team members: newcomers are ridden to keep up the pace in the beginning, and

then after they get comfortable with the pace of the line, they cut back in the same manner: “Hey, grandpa, keep up! Hurry up, old man!” The older workers do not get offended, and even ridicule themselves in an attempt to prevent further ridicule. This type of diversity driven jokes are vital sources of entertainment on the line.

Conclusion

Older workers suggested many recommendations for the company and most of them revolve around the issues of safety. Older workers insist that Kaizen should not outsource the easy jobs or transfer them to temps, because the older workers can prolong their careers only if they have access to easier jobs. The following interview presents the pathetic situation of older workers:

> Cross-docks, fork drivers and stuff like that, most of the easy jobs should not be eliminated. They should not hire temps to drive the forklift or trucks. Those were the jobs that the older people were planning on having so we do not have to work that much. They are eliminating all these easier jobs for lower pay. We do not have a lot to look forward. When we were hired, we were promised, not promised, that these easy jobs will be ours. I am here middle-aged and I don’t see where I can work in twelve years. The company says that this is the way companies are doing now, that we have to cut costs.

The second most important suggestion is related to the fitness and well-being programs. Older workers would like the company to encourage more stretching exercises. If the company would compensate workers for the time spent in the gym, this would be seen as a safety investment, and ultimately as an investment in their workforce.

Generally team members prefer to work in mixed teams with a balanced number of young and old workers because teams develop a complementarity between the skills and abilities that younger and older workers bring to the table. As older workers are unanimously recognized as the teams’ champions of safety, quality and problem-solving, teams will lose valuable knowledge and expertise upon their retirement.

Third, Kanter’s theory on tokenism and social contact hypothesis has less chances of operating since the two shifts are homogenous in age. The complaints against the workers from the opposite shift exist particularly because the younger and the older workers do not have that many chances of getting in contact, and therefore they maintain prejudices against each other.

In conclusion, as the older workers continue to be the teams' champions on safety, quality and problem-solving, Japanese transplants should reconsider the role of older workers in the whole context of lean production. Old age and lean production should not be considered a misfit. On contrary, older workers should be accommodated in such a way as both employers and employee to be able to take advantage of a mutual beneficial employment relationship.

Chapter 7: Temporary Workers and Teamwork

If the previous chapters analyzed three types of visible diversity (gender, race and age), the following chapter explores the impact of an invisible type of diversity (employment status) on teamwork. The analysis includes the experiences of temporary workers in teams, their contributions and fit with the teams, their emotions and identity transformations during their stay at the Kaizen plant. Their unequal status is discussed in the context of teams, as well as the experiences of female and older temps.

A number of participation observation studies at NUMMI in Fremont, CA (Adler, 1992), Mazda in Flat Rock, MI (Fucini & Fucini, 1995), Toyota in Georgetown, KY (Besser, 1996), Subaru-Isuzu in Indiana (Graham, 1997), Nissan in Sunderland, England (Garrahan & Stewart, 1992), two electronics transplants in UK (Delbridge, 1998) and a GM- Suzuki joint venture in Ontario, Canada (Rinehart, Huxley & Robertson, 1997) give us a detailed account on the nature and dynamics of teamwork at Japanese transplants. However, all these studies analyze teamwork in the early phases of lean production, when Japanese transplants did not have in place temporary work programs.

Temporary workers have an impact as an artificial type of diversity on team dynamics and ultimately, on team performance. But it is a form of employment inequality rather than a visible form of diversity (race, gender, age etc.) This chapter analyzes the impact of temporary work on the dynamics of production teams, and is the only study that I know of on the effects of tempwork in the auto industry, particularly at one of the top Japanese auto makers in the US. This chapter reveals how the use of temporary workers creates a great divide in the life of teams, uncovering the duplicity of this employment relationship in the context of high performance work organizations.

Temporary Workers: The Duplicity of an Employment Relationship

Temporary employment is considered "one of the most spectacular and important events that have occurred in labor markets recently" (Nollen, 1996), however US has one of the lowest shares of temporary employment among the OECD countries (less than 5%

in comparison with 32% in Spain and other EU countries[9]). The demographics of this form of employment shows that 53% of temporary help agency workers are women and 50% of temps are under the age of 35 years old, while the number of black and Hispanic temps is double than the number of black and Hispanic workers in traditional work arrangements [10]. Temporary workers tend to have less job satisfaction, especially job security, to be less educated, and to have higher turnover (several hundred percent) than the permanent workers[11]. On average 60% of the female temps and 80% of the male temps choose this form of employment for economic reasons: inability to find regular full-time jobs, layoffs or hopes that temporary work will lead to permanent employment (Kalleberg et al., 1997). Most of the temp jobs that women have are secretaries and data entry positions, and only 5% of all the female temps and 8% of the male temps are assembly-line workers (Kalleberg et al., 1997).

The most important advantages of hiring temporary workers are related to flexibility to meet market demands, reduction of health insurance costs, testing the workforce before hiring, reallocation of resources toward other strategic areas such as sales and marketing, whereas the most important disadvantages of using temps are smaller pool of candidates for management positions, creation of a two-tier workforce, inefficiency, protection of information, problems with corporate loyalty, teamwork, culture and identity (Nollen & Axel, 1996). However, one of the positive aspects of temporary employment is that it helps some disadvantaged categories of workers (young, women, minorities, unemployed) to develop more skills and to strengthen their human capital. (Nollen, 1996).

Most of the temps have an experience of unstable, entry-level jobs that lack opportunities of involvement, training and trust. Tempwork leads to the fragmentation of workforce, temps themselves being dissociated from one another (Smith, 1998). Temps become a fragmented workforce as they start competing with each other to become a "who's-impressed-the-most-people type" (Smith, 1998). Temps also dissociate from one

[9] OECD Employment Outlook, 2002

[10] Supplement to Current Population Survey, February 2005, www. dol.gov

[11] OECD Employment Outlook, 2002

another as they do not want to associated with the image of "bad temps" (lazy, uncommitted and with a poor work ethic). Although apparently tempwork opens to re-skilling opportunities, in fact it deepens social inequality and offers less mobility opportunities for both full-time and temporary workers (Smith, 1998).

Temps can fill a hole in the team when a team member is injured, but can also create a great divide in teams. Temporary work arrangements affect the power dynamics between employees and employers (Kalleberg et al., 2000). Work in blended teams with permanent and temporary employees undermines the loyalty of standard employees as the past research shows that managers delegate the tasks of socializing, training and supervising temporary workers to permanent employees (Geary, 1992; Pearce, 1993; Smith, 1994). Thus, the core employees end up having increased responsibility and decreased mobility and promotion opportunities (Davis- Blake et al., 2003). Temporary workers can be used sometimes as a disciplining factor for the standard employees who understand that they can be replaced at any time with temps if they limit their efforts or if they have are union sympathizers (Davis- Blake & Uzzi, 1993; Smith, 1997).

The coexistence of two tiers of workforce with the rhetoric on inclusiveness, equity and respect for people is a good example of the contrasting logic of the new forms of organization (Smith, 2001). The high performance work systems that are participative systems by definition ironically do not share the intellectual and social rewards of this type of organization with the people who contribute to their success. The use of tempwork creates big morale problems or dilemmas in teams, as "the foundations of temporary employment – transience, detachment, and disposability- threaten the building blocks of participative work cultures" (Smith, 2001).

Temps were asked to describe their experiences of working in their current team, as well as compare their experience with other teams they worked with at the plant. The permanent team members were asked to develop on the advantages and disadvantages of working with temps in a team and the contribution of temps to teams. Similarly, they were asked to recall their own experiences as temps before being hired as permanent workers at the Kaizen plant. Therefore, the following data include stories from temps from their first days at the plant and up to five years.

Kaizen Motors, uses temps for three main reasons: fluctuations in business (volume), replacing team members on leave (manpower) and developing a better hiring pool (recruitment) (corporate literature, 2006). Temporary workers in the lean systems are a buffering strategy to fill for sick production workers, but also to protect the regular production workers from firing during times of recession. Thus, temporary workers become indispensable actors of lean production.

Temps account for 11% of the total workforce at the Kaizen plant, and roughly 20% of the total of assembly-line workers (company administrative records, 2006). 42% of temps worked on first shift and 58% on the second shift. Temps' yearly turnover rate was 44.4%. Most of the temps had previous manufacturing experience and decided to join the temporary program as a strategy of getting in permanently at the Kaizen plant. Others had only fast-food experience or worked previously in dead-end jobs.

Following the post 9/11 economic recession, Kaizen had a hiring freeze that resulted in a waiting time of more than five years for temps to get a permanent position. Due to the hostile reactions of workers and of the community, the company recently decreed that temps should not work at the plant for more than 22 months before they are let go and has the objective of hiring soon after 18 months. However, the survival of the fittest law of the line ensures that only the most qualified and fittest temps last two years, meaning that only 10-15% of temps will be offered permanent employment in the end. Temps are evaluated every six months. The most important indicators of their performance are attendance and quality, but the team leader should also write a report/ recommendation about their attitude and work ethic.

Temps' Experiences on the Line

Temps can easily be recognized at the plant as they wear T-shirts or hats with the name of their temp agency and usually have new hardhats. These distinctive symbols are used to help easily identify the temps on the line in case they need back up. Temps make on average 400$/ week (with overtime) and usually loose between 15 - 40 pounds during their first six months on the line. Many temps drive four hours (two hours back and forth) every day to get to the plant, because it is considered an excellent job opportunity.

Temps have a cultural shock during their first days at the Kaizen plant. The first contact with the immensity of the plant and the nature of work on the line is

overwhelming and intimidating. The turnover rate of temps is 44.4%, which leads to a constant flow of incoming and outgoing newcomers in teams. Some of them do not come back from their first lunch at the plant, but most of them quit during their first two weeks. Production is particularly affected when temps walk out during their assignments, as the line will be understaffed that day (Parker, 1994). This process of self-selection filters from the very beginning the workers who are not the best fit with the job.

The past literature on temps shows that temps have to go through many critical situations like: identity crises (stigma, uncertainty, low status and prestige in society, alienation, Rogers, 2001), organizational crises (role ambiguity, constant surveillance, pressures to over perform and to fit in, rituals of initiation, continuing mobility etc), and family crises (low wages, bad health insurance, even simple things like buying a house: "who is going to give a loan to a temp?", said one of my interviewees). Temps end up mostly in two situations: they are even overworked (in high-status and high-paying jobs) or underworked (in low-status, low-paying jobs) (Kalleberg, 2007). Overworking in the context of high performance work systems means overtime (which does not happen at the Kaizen plant) and higher work intensification (which happens at the Kaizen plant). Consequently, this type of *mismatched workers* (Kalleberg, 2007) is more exposed to stress and other health problems that affect workers well-being (heart, problems, diabetes, depression, and immune system etc., Kalleberg, 2007).

Fairness

The general perception (of temps and full-time members) is that the short-term temps deliver lower quality in the beginning till they learn the whole process, whereas the long-term temps (after 6 months) are held at a higher quality standard than the full-time members. Team members confess that temps are more easily fired for quality issues although the full-time members sometimes have even worse quality. Team leaders yell at them, pick on them and write them up easier than with the regular members. Temps are under constant surveillance and are held at higher standards because there is the assumption that temps will restrain their output anyway once they get hired. At the same time, the firing process of full-time members is extremely lengthy and

complicated, so management is trying to control from the very beginning that it hires the cream of the crop.

The double standards exist even when it comes to compensation and benefits. Temps as employees of the temp agencies make a half of what the full-time members are making for the same type of work. They do not receive the big bonuses twice a year, and their health insurance is not as competitive as the insurance offered by Kaizen. Also, temps cannot participate in the perfect attendance ceremonies or get discounted tickets (although some of the team members will buy the discounted tickets for them).

Only few temps confessed that team members give them a hard time, such as looking down and talking trash to them. When all the employees received Mp3 players for the company's anniversary, some of the full-time members complained that temps get this symbolic bonus. Some team members can be very cruel and offend temps by telling right in their face that they are "nothing but a temp"! Team leaders might loose their patience and yell more at them, too. However, most of the full time members treat temps nice after they ended up the trial period of six months.

Emotions

Emotional labor is a significant component of temporary work as temps have to try to be as friendly, helpful, enthusiastic, nice, calm and warm as possible to ensure that they get permanent employment or other important assignments (Rogers, 2001). Most of the temps are content with the opportunities that they have at the plant. They all remember the thrill and excitement they had when they received the hiring letter as temps. The hiring letter does not give them false expectations and specifies the duration of employment: a two year assignment.

Emotions are intertwined with the perceptions of fairness in teams. Attachments between team members are combined with reciprocal feelings of animosity. Temps sometimes have feelings of animosity towards the full-time members because they receive considerable more benefits while they are held at lower standards. On the other hand, full-time members feel animosity towards temps because they take their places in the first shift, while some of the permanent workers are stuck in the second shift.

These double standards and feelings of instability and insecurity build up mixed emotions for both temps and the full-time members. Full-time members try to be restrictive with their sentiments towards temps, because they do not have any idea how long temps will last on the line. This coldness makes temps' transition to be even more difficult. A current temp and former union organizer at a supplier plant is the most bitter about the condition of temps on the plant:

> Oh, yeah, I've seen people crying. I've cried many times, but I try to hold my mouth. I've seen people curse, throwing things. We can get in a lot more trouble than a team member. They can walk us out. I've seen people going crazy. They go nuts. A temp is on probation for six months for arguing so badly with his team leader. He was very professional, but you could see his eyes steaming.

In some cases, team members did not speak with the new temps on their teams for a month. After awhile, full-time members start opening up more towards temps. When temps are transferred to other teams, both temps and team members are saddened by the move. It's a brain drain, as well as an emotional drain, as they get attached to each other and have to cut the ties again. A twenty two years old temp describes his experience as a line traveler:

> You have to watch what you say. Some people are religious, some like to do dirty talk. You learn that when you jump from group to group. I don't like to move because you get attached to people. They will just tell you that next morning you are going to work with another group because they are short on people. I hate to move again.

Temps are embarked on an emotional roller-coaster during their stay at the Kaizen plant. In the beginning, they are quiet and reserved, and fighting for the group acceptance. Then, they are vulnerable and moody as the underclass of the line. In the end, they become aggravated and frustrated if the two years time is running up.

Team leaders consider that they do not see the real personalities of temps until they are hired permanently, mostly because team members teach temps to keep their thoughts and ideas for themselves till they are certain of a permanent position. The symbolic interactionist perspective could explain this covert behavior of temps as the dramaturgy of teams, where temps have different performance back-stage or front-stage and develop masked identities (Goffman, 1959)

Full-time members sometimes associated temps with "slave labor, "exploitation", "alienation" and "outcasts". They were more angry and vocal about the situation of temps on the plant, whereas only two out of the thirteen temps complained about their situation during the interviews. Most of the temps showed an overt enthusiasm for their jobs at the Kaizen plant. Was this a fake enthusiasm or temps are indeed very excited about their new job opportunities as the plant? I believe that they did not want to show their discontent with an external researcher for fear that a research study might lead to the end of the temp program on the plant, but also because enthusiasm has become a part of their persona at work. As Smith (1998) previously showed, most of temps' criticisms against their companies revolves around temps' frustration that they might not be hired permanently, since only 10 to 15% of temps succeed in being converted to permanent employment.

Past research explains that many temps enthusiastically show their commitment for their new jobs which are perceived as great opportunities for personal development. Temps also develop new employment identities as they proudly associate themselves with the high status and prestige of their temporary employers. Temps develop enthusiasm for their jobs as a form of resistance to the alienation of their work, their selves and from others (Rogers, 2001) or because of their low employment trajectories (Smith, 1998). To the extreme, some temps said that they would even work as temps forever for top companies (Smith, 1998). Similarly, Kaizen's permanent workers who had to temp between three and five years (the grandfather group) were not bitter at all when they look back at the time they spent as temps. Even when they became discouraged for waiting for so long, they realized that their job has better benefits and more opportunities for professional development than any of their previous employers. A former coal miner now a temp droved every day 113 miles back and forth for five years until he lent a permanent position at the plant. He is grateful for the job he had as a temp (an easier work than in the mine) and "couldn't have wished for more". All of the temps said that if the Kaizen plant will offer them a permanent position tomorrow, they will take it in a heartbeat.

Thus, even the precarious employment situation of temps is not associated only with negative emotions (stigma, embarrassment, shame, fear), but also with the

central emotions of enthusiasm and gratitude. I genuinely believe that temps did not show a fake enthusiasm (impression management). The proof is that once they are hired permanently, they do not recall their experiences as former temps in negative terms. I heard many times that "I wish I have come here earlier", proving that ultimately their overall experience at the Kaizen plant is a gratifying and rewarding experience.

Female and Older temps

Kelly Girl is the prototypical image of the female temp – "brisk, efficient and unthreatening"- because after all, "she is just a temp" (Henson, 1998). Although most of the women temps hired by the Kelly Services are still doing clerical and office work, some of them trade the Kelly Girl image with the Rosie the Riveter symbol and choose to start careers in high assembly, like at the Kaizen plant.

Temps are exposed to more abusive situations anyway (Rogers, 2001), but female and older temps are even more vulnerable because of their precarious status. Female temps describe their emotions and fears:

> I was so afraid that they will not be giving me a chance if I do not keep up, but I was giving a chance. It was a very good experience. I was the first temp they ever had in that group. They said: "If we do something wrong, we are sorry. Please tell us because we never had a temp". I remember in one occasion that a man, who was derogatory about every temp, told to my face that the only reason I was here as a temp was to find a good husband who makes good money as a team member. I told him: "Don't worry, it will not be you! I don't want to share my money with you either".
>
> First month I was very uncomfortable because they did not talk to me. I was miserable. I hear now my colleagues wondering if a temp will make it or not. I wondered if they said that about me. It is harder for women temps. They automatically judge a woman. They make bets on women, if they will make it or not.

Thus, the drama of teams includes a back-stage and a front-stage (Goffman, 1959). As much team members try to be inclusive with the temps, their difference stands out and they are judged based on their performance behind the scenes. The temporary status seems to be the most divisive type of "otherness" on the line. In the beginning, temps carry with them the stigma of the marginal worker (Park). Although an invisible dimension of diversity, this employment status creates a greater divide in teams than any of the other visible dimensions of otherness (gender, age, and race).

This female temp wanted to send a message to all the temps who start their work at Kaizen Motors. She said that the temp agencies instill a fear in temps before they go to the plant, so that they give the best of them. However, she encourages the new temps to not have fear, because the firing process is lengthy and if temps do mistakes, they are given many chances to improve.

Obviously, the company does not impose any age restrictions for temps, forty five year old or fifty year old temps having the same chances of getting hired permanently as the twenty years old workers. A forty five years old male temp in his first month at the Kaizen plant is amazed of the opportunities that he is having:

> Kaizen is doing a superb job. They treat temps the same. If you are a temp or old, there is no difference. If they see you struggling, everybody will bend their back to help you. This is the best place I ever worked. I wish I come earlier.

Team leaders show an enormous amount of respect for the middle aged workers who join the temp program. Their stand is that older temps have the same chances like all the other temps, no better or worse. However, they confess that it takes a little bit more time and patience to train the older temps, because they are more set up on their ways and more nervous. They also try to work faster so they can prove themselves.

Temps' contributions to teams

Suggestions and problem-solving. Temps experience conflictual demands when it comes to suggestions. On one hand, team members appreciate that they bring fresh perspectives to the team, but on the other hand, temps as newcomers to a group are rather reluctant to voice their opinions:

> They do not want to speak, they do not want to stand out, they want to fit in and blend as easily as they can. I did not see any temp standing out and suggesting something. They do not want to sound silly, they do not want to make the team mad, because they can suggest something that nobody wants to do, so they just blend in. They can suggest, but they won't because they would be afraid to rock the boat. If they make someone mad, then they will loose more than they would gain.

Most of the temps confessed that they do not feel ready to offer any suggestions about a job they know so little about. Some of them said that they will suggest more after they finish their training and learning. Other teams have democratic voting and if the

temp made a good suggestion and has unanimous support, then the suggestion is adopted by the whole team. In other teams, if temps have an idea, they will ask one of the team members to present it to the group. When a temp had an idea in a kaizen project, the team did all the paperwork; the temp could not get the deserved reward since technically he was not an Kaizen employees. These situations speak volume about the feelings of insecurity and fear of ridicule that temps experience till they gain the acceptance of the group. Also, Kanter (1977) will say that temps are trapped in their roles and cannot expand their responsibilities to things outside the boundaries of their status.

Productivity and quality. Temps have on average a lower productivity, because of their lack of experience. Only the promise of permanent employment makes them to overachieve and have a higher productivity, like in the case of Hewlett-Packard (Nollen & Axel, 1996). It is interesting to see that the Kaizen temps are labeled by the regular team members either as overachievers, if they do well or as slackers, if they do bad, but not as average workers (e.g. "they are really hard or really sorry"). Even when temps manage to have an equal performance with the full-time members, it is visibly for everybody that they try a lot harder. These extremes labels of performance prove the concept of enhancing or exaggeration of differences and the performance pressures that temps have to face due to their token status (Kanter, 1977). Here's how a permanent team member described temps' performance:

> When they come in they are trying to overachieve and do as hard as they can. Temps will do whatever you want them to do. The temp that I know always works extra because he needs a good recommendation from the team leader and group leader. Temps are so on top of it. They make sure everything is done perfect. Temps will clean the floor with a toothbrush and will do it as fast as they can. Then, our team leaders will say: "Look, a temp can do it, then you can do it!". Yes, you can do it for a day or two but not for ten or more years.

The image of temps as overachievers can also be explained by the fact that permanent members expect the worst from temps and are very pleasantly surprised when they do a good job (Parker, 1994). Temps overachieve also as a form of resistance to structural disadvantage and to the stigma of marginal worker (Smith, 2001). The overachieving temp is associated in the literature with the image of Sisyphus, who no

matter how much he struggles, his efforts are underappreciated and has to start everyday all over again (McAllister, 1998).

Safety. Temps' biggest challenge is safety. Safety is the top priority for everybody at Kaizen Motors, but temps are particularly torn apart between their desire to succeed, the pressure to perform well and the risk of getting hurt. A team member describes their conflictual situation:

> Full-time members are more concerned with safety. Temps will try to prove themselves. Go-go-go and that's when you can make more mistakes or hurt yourself. They will get injured. And if they are injured, they will not be hired. Temps do not feel comfortable to say "this is something that hurts me ", because it will be a ticket to straight out of the door. If I were a temp, I wouldn't say anything. I would keep my mouth shut, work my twenty four months, get hired and then I will say: "This hurts".

Kaizen Motors has recently made public that injury on the job is not an impediment for the permanent hiring of temps. This change of policy was needed because temps tended to hide their injuries for fear that they are going to be denied permanent employment. Kaizen allowed injured temps to return to their positions on the line, as one of the temps in my sample testified. However, most of temps show distrust towards the new policy change. Team leaders consider that only 5-10% of temps slow down or are hurt all of a sudden after the permanent hiring.

Temps and team dynamics

Some teams did not work with all the regular members during the last four years, since they always had somebody on restriction. Therefore, the dynamic of team is constantly changing as there is always a temporary worker in the team or group that needs to be trained. One of the group leaders noticed that when a new person joins a group, it takes the group backwards to the forming and storming phase.

Temps contribute in many ways to their team success. First of all, they bring a fresh perspective to work, a perspective that is not affected by the routine of doing the same operations and procedures for more than ten-fifteen years. As newcomers who are not completely socialized in the company philosophy, they are able to discover more defects or irregularities than the old comers who are numbed by the repetitiveness of work. Second, temps are an infusion of young blood in the team, meaning that they

refresh the team spirit and climate. When temps join in, teams are suddenly awakened and eager to hear newcomers' stories about their families, children and past work experience, as humor and joking become a basic human need on the line.

Temps mean manpower to the groups. The main advantage of using temps is that it gives more flexibility to the team in the job rotation cycle and it helps filling in when team members are absent. The first day after the July shutdown, manpower was terribly: people were on restriction, on vacation, involved in car crashes or called on duty in the military. This is when temps get in and keep the line going. Temps are human buffers that help teams have control over unpredictable environments. It is safe to say that teams would not be able to function and accomplish all the jobs in the rotation cycle if it weren't for temps. Paradoxically, these peripheral workers become a vital, core category of workers who keep the line running. Temps are a disadvantaged category of workers who work with less benefits, pay, prestige, and status for the welfare of teams, and ultimately for the welfare of the lean systems. Ironically, the security of teams is based on the insecurity of temps.

The most important keyword that constantly comes up in these interviews is the metaphor of team as a family, where temps are the adopted children. Most of the temps are encompassed by the new adoptive families like one of their own and participate in all the activities, including eating lunch together. A team leader compares the process of training a temp with the process of educating a child:

> Training a temp is like raising a kid. If you let them cut corners, they will be disrespectful. If you start them off with good habits, they will have good habits.

In other teams, temps are reminded of their different status and are told that they should participate to team activities only if they want to (exaggeration of differences, Kanter, 1977). Other teams give one-two months to the temp to prove himself and to see if he or she is going to make it, so temps have to go through a transitional process till they gain the acceptance of the group. The group will come forward and embrace him only if the temp does also extra steps that show that he wants to blend and fit in the new group. In the end, there are teams that practice the typical rituals of initiation and degradation

ceremonies for newcomers that highly cohesive groups usually practice in organizations (Gabriel at al., 2005). A temp is describing his initiation process:

> They were a little hard on me in the first weeks. I came from a desk job. I never worked in a factory before, and I was not physically fit. It was hard to get up to speed. It was a guy in particular who rode me a lot: "You suck!", he told me. He probably thought that this is joking, but he was also chiding me a little bit to work faster and harder.
>
> I heard horror stories, but it never happened to me. Before I came here, people told me that the temps are treated badly here, but I never experienced it. First days, people helped me and treated me good. They hazed me a little bit, but not too bad: "You will not make it in two weeks!" or "Are you sure are you coming back from lunch?".

Other teams take advantage of the inferior status of temps and give them the hardest jobs in the job rotation cycle, on the grounds that "temps are fresh" and can do the tougher jobs whereas the veterans of the line have been already injured on those jobs. Temps do not have any choice but to accept those jobs and fear of complaining. A female temp explains that "this is the nature of the beast: to always look down at people beneath them". The democratic participation in teams is under question when temps are seen as insiders and outsiders at the same time (Smith, 2001)

Team members developed a solidarity with the temps and back up their demand to be hired earlier than 22 months. Team members insist that temps should be hired between 6-12 months. According to the survival of the fittest principle, bad temps are going to self-eliminate themselves during their first year, and after that, there is only a waiting game that increases the anxiety of temps. They also say that if temps are considered part of the team, they should be allowed to participate in the perfect attendance ceremony and have access to discounted tickets. Team members also suggest to the company to be more transparent about the hiring process of temps. They recommend the company to regularly meet with the temps and to present them statistics on how many temps are hired every month, and predictions about when each class is going to be hired.

The situation of temps on the plant is ambiguous and ambivalent as they are insiders and outsiders at the same time. Some teams treat temps as their own members, others have a waiting game restraining their involvement till the temps successfully pass

the first six months. Many full-time members embraced the following position on the temp issues:

> Temp workers are by and large in the worst situation than anybody in all this plant. They can't say: "You guys are hurting me, I can't do this". They are out of here, if they do it. To me that's slave labor. It is very much out of character for our company, but it's profitable. If you ask me, this was a much better plant before the temps came in. In the beginning, they used temps only on pick vacation times, that was a good time for everybody, then they realized that they can use temps for cheap labor. It's a non-win situation for everybody except for the company. I understand that companies are doing it, but not companies that are as successful as Kaizen. You have to go to temporary workforce when times are hard, but when times are great, you have to take care of the people that got you there!

When temps have a successful transition from the short-term to long-term status, they earn the full support and encouragement of the full-time members. Some team leaders ask their temps to wear regular T-shirts and hats after they've been with their teams for more than 6 months, as a sign that temps have become one of their owns.

Permanent members are sympathetic to them because they had to go through the same difficult times in their "teen" years on the line. They are not only temps' emotional supporters, but also their advocates on HR related issues. A temp is telling his odyssey of getting hired on:

> I am honest, horrible at interviews. They asked me what I do not like about the job. I told them that I do not like repetition and I flipped the interview. I was about to loose my job. I will not kiss up to them. My colleagues and my team leader called HR and the higher-ups to tell everybody that I am a good worker. I am a hard worker, but if you do not say what they want you to say, they will not hire you.

Temps work with six- seven different groups till they are hired permanently. This experience is a diversity lesson in itself, as they soon come to realize that they are not treated the same by the different groups they join. In some groups, they might have to face the perception that temps should pick up team members' slack, whereas other teams can organize baby-showers or even parties for them when they get hired on. Temps are socialized differently from shift to shift, which leads to tensions in

their teams. Second shift teams felt that they have to retrain the temps who came from the first shift (the older shift), and taught them the proper way.

The immersion of temps into teams highlights even more the duplicity of their employment relationship with middle management. Team leaders are in charge with the training, safety and coordination of temps, while temps are and aren't at the same time their own subordinates (Smith, 2001). Similarly, Smith (2001) gives many examples from the high-tech industry where managers tries to correct the inequality of the system by including temps in minor social functions, giving them paid days off, modest cash rewards, and even advising them for the permanent employment interviews.

The leading disadvantages of working with temps in a team are their low retention rates and the bad quality of their work (at least in the initial phase). Temps are initially trained to do two jobs that usually are the easiest in the job rotation cycles. Therefore, if a team member is on restriction and has to be replaced with a temp, the rest of the team will rotate only three or four instead of five jobs. Consequently, the permanent workers have to rotate the most difficult jobs more often, which takes a toll on their bodies on a long run and exposes them to more injuries. Temps' bodies also hurt and ache because of the repetitive movements of doing only two jobs over and over again.

Temps are the double edge sword for the stability of teams as they hurt and help the stability of teams at the same time. They come in handy when the team is short on manpower. Teams invest time and energy into training them, but they can always be moved to other teams. The circulation of temps is a cycle of support in and out of teams. When the full-time members come back from restrictions, temps will be "borrowed" by other teams or groups. A team member describes the main disadvantage of working with temps in the team:

> They do not stick around for very long. They are moved to other groups and you loose all that training. We lose six weeks of training them for nothing. We don't get any reward out of it. To the company is a big advantage, but it costs us.

In a company obsessed with quality, the many defects that temps turn in stands out as a main disadvantage. Team members helped me understand why temps deliver such a bad quality work in the beginning: they do not receive the best training (since

trainers expect that a half of them will leave anyway), their training is comprised sometimes from one month to a week (if they are badly needed on the line), screening of temps is not rigorous, physical adjustment to assembly-line work etc.

The exaggeration of differences associated with their token status (Kanter, 1977) can easily transform temps into the scapegoats of teams. If team members are tired and hurt, they blame the temps for having the easiest jobs. If temporary positions open up in the day shift, the permanent workers blame temps for taking their spots in the first. Most of all, team members get aggravated when temps are transferred to other teams and replaced with other temps. Full-time members do not understand the reason of having to train another temp all over again, when they already have a trained temp on their team.

Most of the permanent team members are bitter-sweet regarding the impact that temps have on their teams. They built up frustrations against them, while being sympathetic with their condition at the same time. A team member said:

> The bad part is that they are doing the same thing we are doing for half the money. They get hurt and most of them have to mask it until they get hired, and then they are getting an operation. We know about it but we are not going to tell anybody. It happens all the time. It's not fair for them to work here two years before they are hired. I don't need two years to see you are a good worker. They learn the easiest jobs and we end up doing the hardest jobs twice or third a day. On a long run, people are getting hurt.

The overwhelming majority of team members mentioned that if they could choose, they would definitely prefer to work with full-time members instead of temporary workers. Full-time members are preferred to temps because they know all the jobs in the job rotation cycle and are not overstressing the other team members. At the same time, some workers say that they prefer to work with temps because they are hardworking and do not complain as much as the full-time members, especially the disgruntled workers from the first shift, with longer tenure at the plant.

Interviews showed that team members are ambiguous about the purpose or use of temps on the line. However, none of the team members believed that the use of temps protects their jobs. An extreme position is taken by one of the worker who believes that the company is conspiring to use more temps:

> You should have enough people to build a car. I don't think they use the temps because they want to avoid lay-offs, but because they do not want to hire people. We do not have anything on paper saying that they will not have lay-offs. They would like to have a factory full with temps, trust me! They will make much more money.

Conclusion

Despite the team rhetoric of horizontal integration, the use of temporary workers creates a schism in teams, which leads to the social stratification of the line. Teamwork can increase the power imbalance between team members, temps becoming the underclass of the assembly line. Temporary employment generates confusing work relationships. From a Marxist perspective, temporary workers are a commodity whose main purpose is not necessarily to deliver good work, but to be disposable (Vosko, 2000). As Vosko (2000) puts it, the use of temporary workforce delivers flexibility to employers and "precariousness" to temps. Temps are subjected to more work intensification and higher demands than the permanent workers as well as to alienation, marginalization and resistance from permanent workers who consider them overachievers (Vosko, 2000).

The interviews reveal that temporary workers are not a unified, holistic category of workers. Team members consider that the experiences and contributions of temps to teamwork vary depending on the length of their service with the company. Consequently, the interviews showed that temporary workers form two distinct classes: short-term temps (with a job experience of less than 6 months) and long-term temps (with a job experience of six months and up). Short-term temps, the underclass of the line, struggle with their jobs in the beginning and their quality suffers, whereas the long-term temps, the lower class of workers, who usually work for the company up to two years have a performance equal and sometimes better than regular team members.

The study shows that overall Kaizen temps do not experience technical marginalization (they are not assigned typical temp jobs that usually are the most physical or dirtiest). However, despite the teams' efforts to treat temps as their own members, temps might feel social marginalization because of the duplicity of their employment relationship. Temps have an enthusiastic attitude toward work that shows that they borrow from the prestige and status of their adoption company while trying to internalize the positive organizational culture and participatory philosophy. The study

shows an even deeper fragmentation of Kaizen temp workforce than previously anticipated with temporary temps (temps with a tenure of less than six months) and permanent temps (temps with a tenure of more than six months) that have different experiences and levels of inclusion in teams.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

As one of the first studies on the mature phase of lean production, this study reveals the nature of interactions between co-workers in mature teams and how diversity affects the group and team functioning in the lean systems. As the American society is growing more diverse, there is a tendency not to question if the increasing diversity has a positive impact on the performance of teams. This study shows the context, conditions, and circumstances in which "diversity works better", as well as the optimal degrees of diversity for the well-functioning of teams.

This study contributes in many ways to the literature on Japanese transplants as well as team diversity. First of all, the Kaizen study analyzes to a great detail the dynamics and interactions of Japanese style production teams. The Kaizen study shows how mature teams with mature members evolved in the context of mature lean production. The literature on Japanese transplants is enriched with unique chapters on temporary and older workers, the only account that I know of regarding the role and experiences of temporary workers in high performance work organizations in the auto industry.

The Chapter on Gender and Teamwork shows that women despite their minority status are more enthusiastic and satisfied with their overall work experience at the Kaizen plant. The empowerment, weight loss, high wages and respect that they enjoy at work leads to almost an identity transformation. Despite their preoccupation with quality and safety, we do not have clear indications on how women's presence influence the key performance indicators of groups. However, their presence in teams is desired mainly because of the talk and chat that they bring on the line, which alleviates the boredom of the line. Consequently, women are important contributors to the team climate and spirit (an intermediate variable) that indirectly leads to higher performance. The most surprising finding of this chapter is that good teamwork leads to interpersonal relationships and affairs between team members, conducive to a high rate of divorce on the long term. This is a disadvantage of teamwork never mentioned before in the literature on teams.

The Chapter on Race and Teamwork describes humor and joking as the most central aspect of the racial interactions in teams. Thus, minorities have a positive influence on the team climate, as joking is one of the most desirable activities on the line. The presumed colorblind attitude of teams is a consequence of the longevity of teams. Racial minorities, particularly African Americans, expose more overt enthusiasm and satisfaction with their jobs at Kaizen, which strengthen our initial criticism against Kanter's theory on tokenism.

The chapter on Age and Teamwork reveals an interesting pattern of interactions between the young and older workers in teams. Whereas the younger workers have a Gung-Ho attitude, the older workers take the role of Gurus or spiritual masters of the teams, passing on advice mainly on quality and safety. After a lifetime of working on the line, just-in-time production takes a toll on older workers' bodies, and they see themselves in the situation of not having any easier jobs to choose from. Older workers are considered the teams' champions of problem-solving, quality and safety, and their retirement is going to be a great loss for their teams, and ultimately, for the company.

As temporary workers become from peripheral core workers of the just-in-time production, the chapter on temporary workers shows the duplicity and ambiguity of this employment relationship that creates a big divide in teams. The fragmentation of temps is much deeper than previously anticipated, with short term temps being excluded from the circles of inclusion of teams, whereas the long term temps are treated as regular team members. Temporary workers are held at higher standards than the regular members and have the tendency to hide their injuries. Ironically, the stability of teams is based on the precariousness of temps, the use of temporary employment threatening the building blocks of the participative work cultures (Smith, 1998).

From a theoretical perspective, the Kaizen study showed the limitations of the cultural diversity perspectives developed by Ely and Thomas (2001). The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) complemented the integration-and-learning perspective (Ely & Thomas, 2001) by presenting the optimal conditions that lead teams to an attitude of color-blindness. At the same time, the study reveals a surprising worker satisfaction for the people in token positions at the plant. Women, racial minorities and even temps report higher satisfaction and enthusiasm than the majority

workers, thus at least partially contradicting Kanter's theory on tokenism (Kanter, 1977). However, the numerical representation of tokens in our sample (one member out of five team members, 20%) does not perfectly fit the proportions used by Kanter when she developed her theory (15%). The study reveals that zero diversity and high diversity teams do not function at their best, as the minorities (women or racial minorities) expose higher levels of conflicts between themselves. However, low diversity teams have a more pleasant and enjoyable experience on the line, minorities in these teams showing surprising levels of satisfaction and pride in their work.

In the end, the study advances the symbolic interactionist theory (Mead, Blumer, Goffman) with detailed accounts on the development of the notions of generalized other, different other and multiple others in teams. The concept of generalized other was identified as the bridge that links the theory of symbolic interactionism to the question of difference/ diversity. This study addresses also the apparent failure of symbolic interactionist theories in explaining the nature of emotions, particularly positive emotions that emerge in gendered or racial interactions. Work in a diverse environment was described as an enjoyable and pleasant experience. This study highlights that the master emotions of social interactions in teams are not the negative emotions emphasized by the symbolic interactionists (shame, embarrassment, fear, anguish, stigma, guilt), but positive emotions such as amusement, joy, satisfaction and pride. This study is trying to advance the body of symbolic interactionism by theorizing on difference and positive emotions as an indispensable component of the social spectrum. However, more research needs to be conducted in the area of emotions and difference concerning how the framing of multiple generalized others lead to multiple selves.

From a methodological point of view, the study revealed what I called a loyalty bias of team members to protect the image of their own teams. However, workers spoke enthusiastically about teamwork in general and about their positive and negative experiences of working in other teams. In the end, narratives on teams from all over the plant were collected and they complete the whole picture of teamwork in a Japanese transplant, leaving more room for generalization than the initial sample allowed.

Recommendations

One of the most surprising findings of on the topic of Gender is that teamwork provides an emotional source of support that replaces and sometimes undermines the traditional family. At the same time, both male and female auto workers try to balance difficult work schedules, including shiftwork and overtime that erode their relationships at home on a long term. According to both the qualitative and quantitative data used in the study, balancing work and family is the greatest source of dissatisfaction at Kaizen Motors. Therefore, the work-family programs should be the central part of the inclusion and gender diversity policies at Japanese transplants. Changes in the structure of shiftwork that create age balanced shifts (not the young and the old shift) reduces also the possibilities of dating, while opening more opportunities for the young parents from the night shift to move to the day shift, and consequently to spend more time with their families and children. A single mother also recommended that the Kaizen plant opens a private school for the company employees, similarly to the daycare facility. The advantage of this rather costly initiative would be that school program could be adjusted according to the parents' working schedules, while children could be raised in the culture of teamwork and learning to appreciate other cultures and civilizations. This kind of initiative would strengthen the community of fate at the Kaizen plant, while creating a pool of future workers that are inspired by the teamwork principles from an early age.

The Kaizen plant is regarded by its workers as one of the most diverse companies they have ever worked for. The minority groups (Asian, African American and Hispanic) are surprisingly more satisfied and appreciate their jobs at Kaizen somewhat more than the Caucasian workers. Racial and ethnic diversity leads to a more enjoyable and fun experience at work, which is a fundamental dimension of the life on the line. However, some assembly-line workers seem to misunderstand and misinterpret the principles of affirmative action, equal employment and diversity at work. In their perspectives, diversity means "meeting the quotas" of minorities (fairness perspective) and do not see the connection with the business objective. Comments about "working hard to meet the quotas of blacks" can be offensive for the minority workers, therefore the company should have a clear, straightforward message on "why diversity is good" and what are the advantages of diversity in teams on the shop floor. Kaizen Motors and other similar

Japanese transplants should do concerted efforts to offer diversity training to assembly line workers, not only to management. In the end, an African American worker recommended the company to promote more minority singers at the perfect attendance ceremonies as a sign that their cultural heritage is valued and promoted.

Concerning the age factor, the company should prepare the transition and the transfer of knowledge from the older workers (primarily in the first shift) to the younger workers (primarily in the second shift). According to the team leaders, the mother company practices shift rotation in Japan, and these practices have been adopted by some of the Kaizen transplants in US where workers have to rotate the shifts every two - three weeks. If the company provides incentives for the older workers to move to the second shift, this new policy would have a positive effect on work-family programs. While the company ensures that the knowledge accumulated in almost twenty years of assembly line experience is not lost, younger team members have the chance to learn easier ways of doing their jobs from the older workers. Since the major complaint of workers at the plant is the bad balance between work and family life, such a policy would allow more second shift workers to transfer to the first shift, which indirectly would help them spend more time with their young families and children. This policy contributes to a more thorough inclusion of women at the plant since most of the second shift women are single mothers with small children, while first shift workers mostly have adult children.

Another potential positive effect of balancing teams by age is reduced probability of dating, based on the presumption that most of the dating or extramarital affairs in teams usually happen between members of the same age cohort. This new policy would indirectly combat a major disruption in the life of teams that leads to an alarming rate of divorce. However, some of the potential negative effects of this policy are that the older workers will be unhappy and bitter to move to second shift. Some of the oldest workers have always worked first shift only because they had the luck to be hired in the initial phase of the plant. This policy would support the spirit of the community of fate at the Kaizen plant giving the older workers more advisory roles (Gurus) in the second shift, while strengthening the families affected by the tempo of lean production. Also, based on the assumptions of the contact hypothesis, this age balancing of teams would reduce the prevalence of conflicts between shifts.

In the end, until the company will define clearly the role of temporary workers, temps will continue to be the pain and panacea for teams at the same time. The symbolic interactionist showed us that the meanings associated with our gestures and actions are central to the social interactions, therefore the Japanese auto makers have to address a central issue that affects their inclusion rhetoric: are temps central or peripheral actors of the drama of lean production?

Since the temporary employment as well as high performance work systems are on the rise, companies should draw more effective strategies on the inclusion of temps and try to clarify the role of temps in the context of their workforce. First, by targeting temps with previous manufacturing experience or auto experience, temps could become equal actors on the participative systems arenas. Second, companies should be aware of the inequalities generated by this employment relationship and should try to hire more permanent workers and fewer temps. Third, if temps are acknowledged as core, and not peripheral members of the lean systems, they should be granted higher compensation. In the end, temps' role ambiguity is generated by the company's lack of transparency concerning the role that temps will actually play in the plant, therefore, companies should have firm policies on when temps can become permanent.

The insights, skills and experiences that temps have developed as members of other organizations (in this case, auto suppliers) are potentially valuable resources that the work group can use to rethink its primary tasks, products, strategies and practices in way that will advance its mission (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Companies that adopt the integration-and-adaptation perspective should look for new and fresh perspectives and strategies everywhere, including among their second-tier workforce. Temps should be encouraged to participate in the suggestions systems and quality circles with equal benefits like the team members, thus being fully integrated in the core of the lean philosophy. Diversity training should also include training about the most common problems encountered by temps, so that the typical temp is more quickly integrated in teams and does not become the stranger of the line.

Future Research

The Kaizen plant is a huge melting pot, where people of different races, grandparents and kids, men and women work happily together. However, there are other types of invisible diversity that could have a more profound impact on the team synergy than gender, race and age. Nationality could potentially play a more significant role in the teams' dynamics than race, as nationality is associated more highly with different educational background, different cultural experiences, work habits and work ethic. Similarly, a rural versus urban up-bringing could have a significant effect on teamwork since workers from rural areas are considered to be more mechanically oriented (if they were raised on a farm), whereas workers from the city are considered to be more technologically savvy. Last, educational background could have a powerful effect on team relations, since high-school graduates work side by side with college and sometimes graduate school graduates in the same teams. It would be interesting to find out if the team members with a college degree bring more contributions in terms of problem-solving, quality and safety than the high-school graduates.

A follow-up project will provide a statistical analysis of the key performance indicators of all the thirty groups in Assembly. Thus, the new quantitative data are going to reveal important information on the correlation between degree of diversity and level of performance, and will complement the rich data that we already collected through interviews. This second study will complete the picture of diversity and its consequences on teamwork in a Japanese transplant. Also, more interviews are needed to conclude about the effects of racial joking in teams, particularly interviews with members of racial minorities.

This project is particularly significant in the context of the auto industry, because the models developed in the auto industry tend to spread out to all the other sectors of economy (Turner, 1991). This project is relevant for the hundred of thousands of men and women working together in the auto industry, particularly in the Japanese transplants, but the findings can be extended well beyond the context of the auto industry to high performance work systems in steel, apparel, electronics, health care, insurance etc. or in other physically challenging trades, such as army, police, firefighting, construction etc.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The Impact of Diversity on Team Performance
at Lean Manufacturing Companies

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about diversity in production teams in lean manufacturing companies, because you are a team member. Any team member that works on an assembly line in a lean manufacturing company is eligible to participate in this study. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 100 or more people to do so.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

This is a doctoral dissertation research project. The person in charge of this study is Darina Lepadatu, a graduate student from the Department of Sociology in the University of Kentucky. She is being guided by advisor Dr. Thomas Janoski from the same department.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to understand the inner mechanisms that make diverse production teams to work better. We would like to review the best current practices of diversity in teams as it contributes to the increased performance of lean systems. By doing this study, we hope to learn more about the cooperation and interaction between male and female, young and old, temporary and permanent workers and people of different races in teams. This knowledge will ultimately lead to a more thorough inclusion of the minority groups in the lean manufacturing companies.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The interviews will involve team members from lean manufacturing companies in the Bluegrass area. They will last 30-40 minutes, depending on whether some sections of the interview apply or not to your working experience, and will be conducted off-line in a private meeting room on-site during normal work hours.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked several questions about your experiences with working in a team, namely the nature of the cooperation and interaction between male and female, young and old, temporary and permanent workers and workers of different races in your team. You will also be asked to voice your opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of teamwork and the contributions that the above mentioned categories bring to problem-solving, system of suggestions, creativity etc. The interviews will be tape recorded.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing during the interview have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life. If you do not want the interview to be tape recorded, I can take notes during the interview, so I can accurately record what you are saying. If at any time you feel that you do not want to answer a particular question, simply say NO or NEXT QUESTION PLEASE. The interviewer will not ask why, and will then proceed to the next question or topic.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate in the study, you will bring a small contribution to the advancement of science on teamwork and diversity. On a long run, the scientific findings in this field are used by companies to adjust their policies and practices in order to create

more effective workplaces. You will receive your normal compensation (as if you were on-line) for participating in this research study interview process.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY PAYMENT OR REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

You will not receive any payment for participating in this study. This interview will not cost you anything other than 30-40 minutes that you spend for participating in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE?

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers or with upper management at your company, we will write about common experiences of team members with working in teams. You will not be identified in these written materials. For

example, your name will be changed; your team number or group number will not be disclosed, as well as any other sensitive information that can disclose your identity. The audiotapes will be kept at a safe location and will be destroyed after the study is completed. We may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky. Once my research is complete, it will be presented at University of Kentucky as part of the requirements toward the doctoral degree. I will then be sharing the final summary report findings with your company. It may also be possible that the research study will be published externally. However, at no time will any names, positions, work locations, or other identifying information be mentioned.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Darina Lepadatu by phone (859 257 6890; 859 536 2672-cell) or by e-mail (delepa2@uky.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

This project has a primarily scientific purpose with some expected practical implications for companies. This project benefits from the academic and financial assistance of the University of Kentucky. There are no other sponsors/ contractors that are involved in this project. You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your condition or influence your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

RELEASE AGREEMENT

I voluntarily consent to participating in this diversity research study conducted by the University of Kentucky. I fully understand that a summary of the results will be provided to my company and/or its affiliates; however, my responses to the questions will remain anonymous. I hereby release my employer and its affiliates from all loss and liability that may occur or be claimed as a direct or indirect result of participating in the survey.

_____

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

_____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____

_

Signature of Darina Lepadatu, Principal Investigator Date

APPENDIX B

The Impact of Diversity on Team Performance

Interview Guide

Demographics:

1. Current Position / Title: _____
2. Group number:_____
3. Team number: _____
4. Gender: 1. Male _____ 2. Female _____
5. Age:
6. Racio-Ethnicity: 1. African American
   2. Caucasian/ White
   3. Hispanic
   4. Asian/ Pacific Islander
   4. Biracial
   5. Other_____
7. Employment Status:
   - Full-Time or Part-Time Team Member
   - Temporary Worker
   - Other _____
8. Highest Level of Education:
   - College
   - Some College / Technical School
   - High School / GED
   - Other _____
9. How many years have you worked for this company? _____
10. How long have you worked with your current team? _____
11. Did you work in a similar field before? If yes, what type of job did you do?
12. Do you participate in a Quality Circle or in the Suggestion System? Why or why not?

Teamwork:

1. What do you like the most about your team? What do you like the least about your team?

2. Think about the best worker on your team (it can be you) and tell me what makes her/ him to be the best?
3. Tell me how the team leader and the group leader influence how you work in a team.
4. If you could choose, would you work in a team or individually in the future? Why?

Gender interactions in teams:

1. How do men and women get along in your team?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with men/ women in a team?
3. What do men and women bring to the team?
    - Who is more active with suggestions and solutions to problems?
    - Who is more productive?
    - Who is more concerned with quality?
    - Who is more concerned with safety in your team?
4. If you could choose, would you prefer to work with more women or more men in team? Why?

Women only:

5. How is it to be a woman and to do this kind of work?
6. What unique contributions do you think you add to the team as a woman? Do the other team members listen to what you have to say? Do your co-workers value you as a member of the team?
7. Can you give any suggestions that will help your organization to include the contributions of women/ men more fully?
8. As a female working in this industry, do you have any specific concerns or issues that you would like to share with us?

Age interactions in teams: (Younger = under 40; Older = 40 & Over)

1. How do younger and older workers get along in your team?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with younger/ older workers?
3. What do the younger or the older workers bring to the team?
    - Who is more active with suggestions and solutions to problems?
    - Who is more productive?
    - Who is more concerned with quality?
    - Who is more concerned with safety in your team?
4. If you could choose, would you prefer to work with younger or older workers in your team?
5. How is it to be a younger / older person and to do this kind of work?
6. What unique contributions do you think you add to the team as a younger/ older person? Do the other team members listen to what you have to say? Do your co-workers value you as a member of the team?

7. Can you give me any suggestions or ideas that will help your organization to include the contributions of young/old workers more fully?

Employment Status (Temporary and Permanent Workers):

1. How do temporary workers and full-time team members get along in your team?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with temporary workers / full-time team members?
3. What do the temporary workers or full-time team members bring to the team?
    - Who is more active with suggestions and solutions to problems?
    - Who is more productive?
    - Who is more concerned with quality?
    - Who is more concerned with safety in your team?
4. If you could choose, would you prefer to work with more temporary workers or more full-time team members in your team?

Temporary workers only:

5. How is it to be a temporary worker and to do this kind of work?
6. What unique contributions do you think you add to the team as a temporary worker? Do the other team members listen to what you have to say? Do your co-workers value you as a member of the team?
7. Can you give me any suggestions or ideas that will help an organization to include the contributions of temporary workers more fully?

Race and Ethnicity:

1. How do the workers of different races and ethnicities get along in your team?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with people of different races and ethnicities in your team?
3. What do the workers of different races and ethnicities bring to the team? Think about suggestions and solutions to problems, productivity, quality and safety.
4. If you could choose, would you prefer to work with workers of the same race or people of different races and ethnicities in your team?

For minority workers only:

5. How is it to be a minority worker and to work with this team?
6. What unique contribution do you think you add to the team as a minority worker (e.g. African American, Hispanic)? Do the other team members listen to what you have to say? Do your co-workers value you as a member of the team?
7. Can you give me any suggestions or ideas that will help your organization to include the contributions of minority workers more fully?

Conclusion:

1. If you could choose your co-workers, what would your ideal team look like in terms of composition?

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Publications

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