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Contextual Creativity and the Experience of Cultural Pivoting in the Workplace

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Contextual Creativity and the Experience of Cultural Pivoting in the Workplace

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Dedication

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Abstract

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore the lived experience of foreign-born professional highly skilled employees living in the United States working for U.S.-centric organizations and the impact the interplay between their ethnic culture and the organization's culture has had on their creativity in the workplace. Fourteen participants were interviewed and shared their experiences of creativity, providing rich stories. Using grounded theory analysis of their statements revealed five primary dimensions and five theoretical propositions. The study offers a heuristic model of the newly identified concept "cultural pivoting." This term describes the importance and impact of having access to several cultural practices and finding behaviours/attitudes/discourses that best suits the situation and/or best solves the problem at hand. Navigating variations of cultural pivoting are indications of what I have called contextual creativity. Thus, the study also adds a different understanding of factors enabling creativity in organizations. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, http://aura.antioch.edu/ and OhioLINK ETD Center, https://etd.ohiolink.edu.

Keywords: Belonging, Contextual Creativity, Cultural Pivoting, Foreign-born Professionals, Grounded Theory, Leadership, Organizational Culture

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Chapter I: Introduction

In a world of corporations with a global reach there is a need for a global workforce. That workforce logically holds a plethora of different cultures, languages, and ways of approaching their work. Company headquarters are often not in the same country as all their employees, or even the majority of their employees. Even within the confines of their headquarter locations, employees may be from anywhere in the world. How companies handle this difference in culture can not only hold a "make or break" situation for the company and its potential profits, but also for the individual employee themselves.

Many have studied and proposed solutions around dealing with cultural differences in the workplace. Indeed, there is even a measure of cultural intelligence (CQ) and suggestions on increasing one's cultural fluency (Daher, 2015; Earley & Ang, 2003). International business transactions often require clear understanding of the cultural norms of those with whom they are attempting these transactions to more easily facilitate successful completion of the goal while avoiding inadvertently offending. Individuals who immigrate to other countries are often encouraged to not only learn the culture of their new home country, to apply those cultural norms in their behavior, but also to sustain them. Called "cross-cultural code-switching" (Molinsky, 2007, p. 622), this intentional and short-term switch in cultural behavior assists individuals in successfully navigating certain situations.

As organizations increasingly build workflows and teams that span across countries and cultures, the impact of these interactions continues to be examined. The influence of workplace culture goes beyond developing an understanding of various cultures so as not to offend and/or to promote smooth business dealings (Meyer, 2014); it is much more significant to organizational success. According to Booysen (2016), while organizations do not need to be

culturally fluent in every culture or on cross-cultural research and theory, they do "need . . . to know how to leverage cultural differences; bridge cultural boundaries; and avoid cultural misunderstanding" (p. 361). And as Eken, Ozturgut, and Craven (2014) explained, "Being a culturally competent leader is not a preferred skill but a required skill" (p. 154). This is true on many levels that contribute to organizational success, including and importantly that of creativity.

The ability for an organization to be creative, leading to viable innovative products and services, is essential to their competitiveness in the marketplace (Van de Ven, Angle, & Poole, 1989). Indeed, "Creativity is one of the key factors that drive civilization forward" (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010, p. 570). Historically, creativity has been studied from the perspective of the individual creator alone and apart from any other influences, as if creativity is an inherent part of particular humans; you either have it or you don't. Referring to the earliest studies, Williams and Yang (1999) concluded that "the major focus in creativity research has been on the individual creator and his or her personality, traits, abilities, experiences, and thought processes" (p. 378). Later research has looked at various components in and around creativity: environmental factors that either boost or inhibit creative performance (Amabile, 1983), organizational culture, and creativity (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Oldham & Cummings, 1996), ethnic culture and creativity (Glăveanu, 2016; Hennessey, 2015), and the Creative Synergy Scale (Climer, 2016), just to name a few.

The lens by which we view the three areas makes a difference in what we seek to discover and, ultimately, what we find. If we view organizational culture and ethnic culture through the filter of creativity, we may see these as factors that influence the creative output for better or for worse. If we view personal/ethnic culture and creativity through the filter of

organizational culture, we may be looking at person-to-organization fit and conformity or how it will impact the business' bottom line. And if we view creativity and organizational culture through the lens of personal/ethnic culture, the particular way in which a member of a group experiences his or her ethnic cultural background and expectations, we may perhaps be identifying where different national cultures diverge in these areas—how different cultures approach factors in the workplace, for example. In this research, there are multiple lenses used to identify the lived experience of creativity among global employees whose ethnic culture is different than that of the organization for which they work.

Statement of the Problem

Over the last three decades I have worked closely with individuals from around the world, both formally in a work environment and informally in my personal life and service activities. Whether they were living in the United States or living in their home countries while working for a U.S.-centric organization—an organization based in the United States and dominated by U.S. culture—all of them represented global diversity and also brought to their environments their own unique (ethnic) culture. In either case, I have witnessed their struggle to reconcile their own culture and the culture of their organization or new country, or to navigate their new environment. One of the practices occurring in this context is called *code-switching* (Molinsky, 2007). People often code-switch when they change behavior or appearance to fit in with a given group (Molinsky, 2007). Several types of code-switching can be required or take place, particularly in the status quo of global teams. First is that of situational cross-cultural code-switching, the expectation that an individual will set aside their culturally normal response to a situation and instead consciously and purposely adopt the behavior of the host country (Molinsky, 2007). A second code-switching expectation is around organizational culture. Even

people from the same national or ethnic culture who are working for a company in the same culture as themselves need to adjust to the values, expectations, and overall organizational culture of the company. It is not static, but multidimensional, multifaceted, and experienced differently as influenced by a range of factors including gender, class, regional and other backgrounds of participants involved. Navigating familiar and less familiar paths can involve a degree of creativity. Cultural adaptation has been critically viewed in the context of assimilation, a term that has been circulating for decades (Gordon, 1964). More recently, it has also been identified as a form of cultural cloning (Essed, 2002).

My approach is different in perceiving adaptation as a potential form of creativity. There is a great deal of research on creativity (Amabile, 1983, 1988; Amabile et al., 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016; Burkus, 2013; Climer, 2016; Csikszentmihalyi, 2009; Glăveanu, 2016; Hennessey, 2015; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Williams & Yang, 1999), organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Gardner, Reithel, Cogliser, Walumbwa, & Foley, 2012; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1983, 1990, 2009; Verbeke, Volgering, & Hessels, 1998), and ethnic/national culture (Ang, Van Dyne, & Koh, 2006; Bednar, BramsonzJones-Rooy, & Page, 2010; Daher, 2015; Earley & Ang, 2003; Eken et al., 2014; Glisson & James, 2002; Hofstede, 1984a, 1984b, 2001; Hofstede & Bond, 1984, 1988; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Meyer, 2014; Molinsky, 2007; Mourey, Lam, & Oyserman, 2015; Parekh, 2006). This includes research on each of these individual topics and in various combinations of the three (Glăveanu, 2016; Greenberg, 2011; Hennessey, 2015). However, there are few studies looking specifically at the lived experience of the interplay between ethnic culture and organizational culture for multicultural employees in U.S.-centric organizations from a creativity perspective (Plakhotnik, Rocco, Collins, & Landorf, 2015).

Within this space of interplay, the research question of this dissertation involves how employees with varied ethnic backgrounds navigate their creative potential in the context of organizational culture and job requirements. The relevance of this question relates to the essential role of creativity and innovation in the workplace in order for organizations to remain competitive in the global marketplace. According to anecdotal evidence I acquired throughout decades of informal observations, there seems to be a disconnect between the organizational culture's expectation of compliance and conformity and their need for creative output.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study is to explore the lived experience of foreign-born employees living and working in the United States for U.S.-centric organizations and, in particular, the impact they feel that the interplay between their own ethnic culture and the organization's culture has on their creativity in the workplace. Further, this grounded theory study not only provided a platform for the voices of these employees to be heard but sought to develop a systems model of the ethnic culture/organizational culture tension and how that can impact creativity in the workplace.

In one of my many professional roles over the last nearly two decades, a global colleague confided in me that he felt constrained, reduced to performing those tasks that the U.S.-centric organization for which we worked felt were "fit" for someone from his country. He felt painted into a corner and unable to share the higher-level skills and talents he had to offer, or to share his creative input into client needs and projects. This has been a common refrain. Other former co-workers or professionals who work in the United States and with whom I had the pleasure of networking have shared similar feelings or frustrations about not quite getting the way things are done, being told they have to change their approach to do things "right" in the organization, or

being passed over for promotions and plum projects because their cultural approach was dismissed or misunderstood. These experiences resonate with research in the larger area of workplace discrimination. The undervaluation of the cultural or ethnic employees or other forms of racial and ethnic discrimination have been studied over decades (Essed, 1991; Evans & Feagin, 2012; Feagin, Early, & McKinney, 2000). What caught my attention in the anecdotal evidence I gathered was the implicit understanding that they had to "deliver" as professionals, regardless of not being seen in their own right. I wondered whether this would impact their overall sense of professionalism in a context driven by highly competitive expectations to be innovative. Their frank comments confirmed I was on the right path.

Research over the years has shown increased interest in a more diverse workforce and the resulting diversity and inclusion practices (Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Shore et al., 2011) as well as the impact on the individual in the workplace (Meyerson, 2003; Molinsky, 2007). In the same vein, others studied adaptation (Pornpitakpan, 1999) and the complexities of multiple forms of exclusion including gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and social class as a basis for developing inclusive alternatives (Klein, 2008). A path-breaking, more theoretical study of the history, politics and practice of multiculturalism came from Parekh (2006). This dissertation was not designed to extend on the broad area of diversity studies in relation to generations of established ethnic minorities in U.S.- or White-dominated organizations in general, which is the focus of most literature of the area of marginalization, exclusion, diversity and inclusion. Instead, I explored the specific phenomenon of creativity in relation to how first generation (or temporary) global professionals navigate ethnic/national difference in a U.S.-centric workplace.

Research Question

This dissertation probed the experiences of foreign-born white-collar or professional employees living in the United States and working with/for U.S.-centric organizations as they try to navigate an organizational culture that may be different from their own or not accepting of differences, and the impact this has on their creativity in the workplace. I listened, explored, and developed a method leading to better knowledge on how an organization's culture can be a supportive place for creativity to thrive with individuals from diverse backgrounds and worldviews. In my approach to this study I sought to give a platform for my participants to share their experiences and, then, looked for patterns in their responses. My goal was to further understand and model the answer to the research question: What is the experience of creativity among multicultural professional employees working within a U.S.-centric organizational culture?

My underlying assumptions were that when an individual's norms are not aligned with an organization's normative expectations conflict, tension, or confusion may occur. The expectation to adapt may sometimes feel or be restraining, especially when people are expected to follow and remain within the tight parameters of an organization's culture whether or not these are in the best interest of the employee and/or, ultimately, the organization's success. This can feel confining. As a result, organizations may be losing something when they (unintentionally) put people in a cultural straight jacket.

The goal of this research was to identify what is being lost (if anything) or, alternatively, if employees have found a way to successfully be creative in spite of those differences, how do they do so? If an organization insists on "this is how we do things here in the United States" and does not allow for latitude or difference, what consequences are there to the ethnically different

employees or the company? Within that overarching umbrella, I had some sub-questions which I aimed to answer either through research of existing literature or through the process of grounded theory. These included:

- Can it be assumed that employee creativity is an element which could be diminished or lost because of organizational inflexibility to culturally different approaches?

- How do employees use ethnic cultural context as a source of their own creativity?

- What do employees need from an ethnic cultural context (if they are from multicultural backgrounds) for their own creativity?

- Can an organizational culture flex to allow for personal experiences of ethnic culture?

I interviewed participants who were born in countries outside the United States, who have currently resided in the United States for more than one year, and who work for a U.S.-centric organization in a professional role. The participants were asked to share their lived experience of creativity in their workplace, the interplay or tension between their ethnic culture and the organization's culture (if any), and how their ethnic culture had an impact on the organization's perception of them as an individual with creative potential.

Situating the Research and the Researcher

The concept for this dissertation has been under the surface in my mind and practice, changing and growing for nearly three decades. The study of culture, particularly cultural influences and interactions, has been the focus of much of my doctoral studies. Through life experiences with individuals who are part of cultures from all around the world, as well as my own strong ethnic heritage and upbringing, this particular area of focus seemed a natural fit. I have been able to observe, discuss, contemplate, and theorize about my observations through this immersion for decades. In my personal life, I have had relationships of varying levels with

individuals from literally all corners of the Earth, and my professional life has found me working in U.S.-centric, global organizations with global and multicultural colleagues. I have had the opportunity to work and interact with some very bright minds from all over the world.

Having spent so much of my life in this multicultural, multiethnic environment, I feel very strongly about the topic of global diversity and what good comes from these global interactions. I have seen and heard and watched and empathized with people who have worked toward becoming, or found it hard to become "the right kind of person" or behave in "the acceptable way" so they can be accepted or successful in their work environment. Coming myself from a multicultural home with an American-Italian ethnic background, I also have experienced some of the struggles of living by what organizations and the American culture consider "the right way of being" and suspending my authentic self. This has at times left me feeling constrained and restricted in expression, overlooked and sometimes invisible, because the way I am as my authentic self does not fully match the culture—spoken or unspoken—that the organization has embraced. The need to adapt to different cultural norms presented at home and in the workplace holds true for nearly everybody. The more closely the work culture matches the home culture—for example in national origin or religious compatibility—the less ethnic cultural code-switching or tension occurs.

Additionally, I identify myself as a creative individual. I composed music and poetry since before I learned how to write. I have heard my entire life that I am "creative," and that seems to be associated with what others see as an unusual ability to make something out of nothing, to create. Indeed, many experts in the field of creativity describe it as a process of developing ideas that are both unique and useful (Amabile, 1996; Burkus, 2013). I have worked in fields where being creative is a highly attractive and valued attribute. This combination of a

lifetime focus and experience on both culture and creativity—as well as both observing and experiencing the impact of a mismatch between home and organizational culture—made this line of research not only attractive to me but also compelling as a worthy endeavor.

Areas of Research

The interdisciplinary nature of the broad topic area of Leadership and Change, in which this dissertation was developed, allows for the use of theories and concepts across disciplines when investigating a particular phenomenon or research question. Rather than contributing to one specific discipline or field of study, the concepts and research areas discussed below reach beyond the boundaries of specific disciplines or traditional fields. Exploring the meaning of creativity in the experience of foreign-born highly skilled professionals in U.S.-centric organizations prompted reliance on building blocks from areas including ethnic culture, diversity and inclusion, organizational culture, creativity, and motivation theory.

Ethnic culture. Culture, as defined by Parekh (2006), is "a historically related system of meaning and significance or . . . a system of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of human beings understand, regulate and structure their individual and collective lives" (p. 143). This definition of culture seems to be fairly standard and accepted across the research, though perhaps stated differently by different authors. This base is important when looking more deeply at any area of culture and multicultural research, including the interactions of individuals working in a global workforce that represents many different cultures around the world. In this dissertation, different cultural frames have been addressed: local culture in the United States where the company is located, influences from the larger United States culture, organizational culture, the culture of a specific work team or group the individual belongs to, ethnic/national background or culture, and the culture of the family unit. Particularly, this dissertation focuses on

the way someone from a different ethnic/national culture experiences and navigates spaces where there may be no space to confirm or express their ethnic/national cultural values and the probing into the way this may or may not impact their creativity in the workplace.

The pressure to conform within a culture—whether that culture is at a societal level or an organizational level—is strong (Molinsky, 2007). Individuals themselves will conform for a number of reasons, including the desire to fit in with others or at the very least not to stand out, and they will strive to conform if there is a clear benefit in conforming (Bednar et al., 2010). Even when acknowledging the need to conform and doing so, potentially, there is a toll for this cultural adaptation (Molinsky, 2007). Psychological challenges of cultural adaptation include the potential for conflict between an individual's deeply ingrained values and the requisite conformity (Molinsky, 2007). This psychological conflict may put additional pressure on the individual to switch back and forth between their own cultural default (Soucie, 2015a) —culturally driven behaviors that occur at what Kahneman (2011) classified as System 1 level thinking—and the expected behavior. This switching requires some degree of navigating and alternating between different norms and value systems. *System 1 thinking* refers to thinking that "operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 20). System 2 thinking requires attention, "effortful mental activities . . . often associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 21). Cross-cultural code-switching requires System 2 thinking to accomplish a purposeful and conscious change in behavior for a specific situation. Cultural default is more likely to occur when an individual is using System 1 thinking; that is, they are responding automatically with little to no effort.

Diversity and inclusion. Organizations are becoming increasingly diverse as they become more global (Johnston & Packer, 1987; Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1993); but how much thought and time is spent in understanding the diverse needs of their diverse workforce? In many cases, organizations may feel they "have it covered" by having Diversity and Inclusion departments, or because they meet standard law requirements. Yet, despite the 2003 estimate of $8 billion spent annually on diversity efforts and diversity training across United States organizations (Hansen, 2003; Kochan et al., 2003), problems still exist in this area. Differences between coworkers—particularly noticeable ones—have been associated with increased turnover (Cummings, Zhou, & Oldham, 1993; Pfeffer & O'Reilly, 1987) and conflict within workgroups (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Eisenhardt, Kahwajy, & Bourgeois, 1997; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Spataro, 2005). One reason may be that the invisible and unseen nature of organizational culture holds an underlying bias against certain groups (Spataro, 2005; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992).

While outright discrimination is rare (and unlawful), more subtle humiliations or aggressions may not only be allowed but are a part of the everyday culture (Spataro, 2005). Creating a diversity department to address issues caused by the problem of diversity only looks at the surface, superficial situations (Klein, 2008). Rather than truly examining an organization's culture and hidden bias, the focus has been on creating policies that can be used as a temporary stopgap or to show how diverse and/or inclusive they are as a company. This approach is "devoid of any understanding of the intangible issues that dominate workplace environments, such as an unwelcoming culture, self-serving delusions about meritocracy, and the subtleties of bias" (Klein, 2008, p. 4). The hidden biases, when not uncovered and addressed, become hidden barriers for individuals who seemingly do not fit the culture of the organization. These barriers

become the basis for decisions on hiring, project assignment, promotions, evaluations, and so on (Klein, 2008).

While *diversity* and *inclusion* are not the same, they often are thought of as one unit (as in the common diversity-and-inclusion department). Diversity as a policy gained popularity during the final decades of the 20th century, while advocacy for the inclusive organization is more recent. Though interrelated, they are not synonymous. Diversity can be defined as "the representation of multiple identity groups and their cultures in a particular organization or work group" (Ferdman, 2014, p. 3). Moving beyond demographics and representation, on the other hand, "inclusion involves creating, fostering, and sustaining practices and conditions that encourage and allow each of us to be fully ourselves—with our differences from and similarities to those around us—as we work together" (Ferdman, 2014, p. xxii). This fostering of work experiences and relationships in the workplace that are inclusive practices should be the goal of organizations. Relationships in the workplace are part of the organizational culture.

Organizational culture. *Organizational culture* has been defined as,

> The pattern of basic assumptions which a group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1984, para. 3)

This set of beliefs and assumptions—shared across a group of people working together—is what is often thought of as organizational culture. This definition is highly similar to the definition of ethnic culture but is focused on the smaller cultural referent of an organization. Others have defined organizational culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others" (Hofstede et al., 2010, loc 5583), or how things get done in an organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Glisson & James, 2002; Schein, 2009). While the definitions of organizational culture put forward by Deal and Kennedy (1982),

Schein (1984), and Hofstede (1980), and others are well known and respected, they are certainly

not the only definitions. Even as long ago as the late 1990s, one source listed 54 definitions of

organizational culture, and those were only the ones that were published (Verbeke et al., 1998).

Schein (1990) pointed out that writing about organizational culture was a dilemma itself in that

there was little agreement "on what the concept does and should mean, how it should be

observed and measured, how it relates to traditional and organizational psychology theories, and

how it should be used in our efforts to help organizations" (p. 109). This has remained a

complication throughout the study of organizational culture and subsequent development models

and representations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1983). And just

as defining organizational culture has proven difficult, it is similarly just as challenging to

identify how organizational culture can impede or enhance creative practices in employees.

Creativity. Many experts describe *creativity* as a process of developing ideas that are

both unique and useful (Amabile, 1996; Burkus, 2013). It is the "useful" part of that definition

that makes the idea worth something; it is what makes it innovation: "In organizations,

developing ideas, projects, processes, or programs that are both novel and useful is the vital

antecedent to leveraging innovation and staying competitive" (Burkus, 2013, loc 125).

Some may think that creativity and innovation are synonymous or, maybe, that they are

two sides of the same coin. However, they are not the same thing. According to Amabile et al.

(1996), "Creativity by individuals and teams is a starting point for innovation . . . the first is a

necessary but not sufficient condition for the second" (p. 1155). Whereas creativity is the starting

point, innovation is about the actual process of bringing the idea to life. What is most important

to organizations is taking that original creative idea to market, and innovation can't be realized

without the creative ideas to fuel it. Amabile et al. (1996) explained, "Like other researchers, we

define creativity as the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. We define innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization" (p. 2).

Creativity and innovation require a great deal of energy. Providing the opportunity for individuals to approach their work using their cultural default (Soucie, 2015a)—responses that fall into their cultural norms, are usually taken for granted without the need to question or rationalize, and thus, rely on System 1 thinking—may lull creativity to sleep, or, alternatively, open up the cognitive/emotional space for potentially greater creativity. At the same time, when individuals are forced to find ways other than their default mode to approach something, it may intimidate them into shutting down, or instead may be a springboard for creativity. Their diverse outlook coupled with the need or effort to overcome their cultural default mode to function in a company could be fertile ground for creativity to emerge. On global teams with multicultural team members, there are bound to be varied outlooks and habits that would lead to rich and creative output.

Fascinated by the interplay between an individual's national/ethnic culture and organizational culture, I conceptualized this phenomenon as *contextual creativity* (Soucie, 2015b). Organizations have their own unique culture, and often part of that is to shut down or require their employees to "code-switch" to the organization's accepted way of being. Doing so can potentially marginalize individuals who are from cultures that differ from the organization's. Between organizational culture and the cultural default (Soucie, 2015a) of the individual lies the possibility of conflict or cognitive dissonance. It may be detrimental to require individuals to code-switch. Learning the way to behave to fit into corporate or national culture, while putting the burden on the employee from another culture, may have negative effects. According to Molinsky (2007), little is known about the long-term effects of sustaining cross-cultural

code-switching, and even short code-switches that were successful can deplete energy and have potential psychological ramifications. It is also possible that the tension or dissonance between an individual's cultural default (Soucie, 2015a) and the organization's culture could be the catalyst to increased creative output as an individual mentally processes their natural approach with the expected approach. This dissertation has taken a closer look at what exactly the experience of creativity is for employees from multicultural backgrounds.

Motivation in creativity. Motivation plays a major part in employee output. Motivation can be—and often is—influenced by the environment. Hennessey (2015) stated,

> Based on a number of investigations carried out over the past four decades, my colleagues and I have established a direct link between the motivational orientation brought by the individual to a task and the likelihood of them performing creatively on the task; and it is the environment, or at least aspects of the environment, that in large part determine motivational orientation. (p. 195)

Over the years, Amabile (1983, 1988, 1996) has done a great deal of work looking at environmental factors which are detrimental to creativity in the workplace and the ties to motivation. This leads to looking more closely at two defined types of motivation—intrinsic and extrinsic.

There are elements of task engagement that are well suited to the intrinsically motivated individual. People who are curious or interested in the content of the problem or task in front of them may be not only engaged, but excited to participate at the task at hand. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as, "the motivation to do something for its own sake, for the sheer pleasure and enjoyment of the task itself " (Hennessey, 2015, p. 195). Research has shown that when individuals are intrinsically motivated while engaging in tasks, they are less likely to view these tasks as something they "have to do" and therefore beyond their control or controlled by external forces. This results in employees feeling they are, in a sense, in a state of play versus work (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009; West, Hoff, & Carlsson, 2013). According to Hennessey (2015),

"Hundreds of empirical investigations have led to the establishment of the Intrinsic Motivation Principle of Creativity: Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity and extrinsic motivation is almost always detrimental" (p. 195). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is tied to receiving some form of reward from an external source for completing a task or an external goal (Hennessey, 2015). Motivation will be discussed in more depth in Chapter II.

Significance to Theory, Research, and Practice

Moving to a new country, potentially learning a new language, and adapting to a new culture is a major event. There is much to learn and many normal cultural responses that would need to be adapted or changed to fit the expectations of the new country. Taking a new job with a new company also requires adaptation and change, no matter where the country of origin. Even an American who changes to a new role at a different U.S.-centric organization has a period of adjustment. Would the expected adjustment to the new position in a specific organizational culture be more difficult for someone who also comes from a different national/ethnic culture? This study is significant in identifying how global employees in the workplace experience the possible impact between the interplay between national/ethnic culture and organizational culture has on their creativity. It also is aimed at contributing to developing a theory of how foreign-born professionals navigate workspaces to allow for their creativity to thrive, or a process for organizations to employ to provide the best work environment for all employees with the goal of increasing opportunities for creativity and creative expression. My intention in doing this research has been to help both the individuals and the organizations that employ them, thereby drawing from concepts, theories, and findings in diverse relevant areas of knowledge.

Methodology, Research Ethics, and Limitations of the Research

The methodology chosen for this study, grounded theory methodology (GTM) offers the ability to delve deeply into the lived experience of the participants, and allows them to more fully explore their own experience(s) throughout the interview process. GTM provides the unique ability to have the benefits of qualitative research with the benefit of allowing theory to emerge from the data gathered (Charmaz, 2009). GTM is explored more fully in Chapter III.

In this study, I asked participants to consider and explore their current and/or previous experience in work environments and encouraged them to share what information they felt comfortable in sharing. There were few moments of discomfort among the participants in discussing their experiences. I do not believe this caused any trauma or major difficulty for the research participants. They were in complete control of what they decided to share or not and were able to conclude the interview at any time. This provided an environment where they are in control and one of high ethical standards.

As with any research study, there were limitations. Given the focus for this research was only on foreign-born individuals living and working in the United States for U.S.-centric organizations, the findings may not necessarily be applicable to the lived experience of individuals on global teams living and working in their own home countries for a U.S.-centric organization. This is an area of interest for future research projects.

Overview of Dissertation

Chapter II delves more deeply into the literature surrounding foreign-born professionals, personal/ethnic culture, organizational culture, creativity, and motivation. In Chapter III, I discuss the research methodology, including a brief history of grounded theory and the design of this study. Chapter IV shares the findings of the grounded theory study, including interviews and

data analysis. Chapter V discusses the findings, their practical applications, limitations of the

study, and directions for future research.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Several different factors are taken into consideration when studying the interplay between organizational culture and an individual's ethnic heritage/culture. The possible impact of the tug of war between the two on creativity requires an examination of several over-arching areas of focus. These areas include foreign-born professionals, ethnic culture, organizational culture, creativity in the workplace, and the interplay of ethnic culture and organizational culture on workplace creativity. Within each of these lie additional areas of research that support the nuances of each. For example, diversity and inclusion is a relevant topic whose research is important for both ethnic culture and organizational culture. Each of these areas have been studied and explored in depth separately, and in some various combinations of all. The study of creativity, for example, has historically seen the practice of decontextualizing the creative process and focusing only on the creative person, removing any study of the influence of the environment itself (Hennessey, 2015). Indeed, Hennessey (2015) stated,

> The last decade has seen a long overdue proliferation of research focused on the creative milieu and the myriad of environmental factors that impact creators and serve to boost or inhibit their creativity of performance. In particular, the increasing globalization of corporate, entrepreneurial, and educational environments has underscored the need to take into consideration the impact of cultural forces. (p. 194)

It is this globalization that brings to the fore the utmost importance of not only studying all aspects jointly, but in exploring, uncovering, and sharing tools and methods to bring about the best and most creative results in these increasingly global and diverse work environments. These research areas were selected for in-depth study, as they seem to be the base of the process or construct of the research question itself and serve as a springboard for the grounded theory study and subsequent theory construction. My research concept centered on the tension and area between organizational culture and an employee's personal/ethnic culture and the impact that has or the role it plays on how they experience creativity in the workplace. As such, the study looked

at the lived experience of creativity in individuals working for U.S.-centric organizations who came from ethnic backgrounds outside of the United States. This literature review, then, provides the empirical and theoretical basis from the aforementioned research domains. Specific experiences in the workplace must also be seen against the background of historical reception and experience of immigrant expertise in the development of United States economy, race-ethnic relations and society as a whole, of which is outlined below.

Foreign-Born Professionals

Highly talented foreign-born workers have been working in other countries since the dawn of time. While a common perception of foreign-born workers in other countries is that of low-skilled laborers, some ancient civilizations had foreign-born individuals who held elite roles in the royal bureaucracies (Anthony, 2017; Shaw, 2003). While Ancient Egyptians held foreigners with disdain for over 1,500 years, as depicted in tomb paintings of foreigners bound and trampled, that view began to change in the early 18th Dynasty (1550 B.C.E. to 1292 B.C.E.) with the emergence of an international culture "that fostered trade and diplomacy, and artistic motifs throughout the Eastern Mediterranean" (Anthony, 2017, p. 4). In England in the Middle Ages, "aliens," as they were identified, were quite commonplace (Ormrod, 2015; Singman, 2013). Though what is currently termed "tolerance" was not the norm at the time, "there were certain early indications that some individuals espoused a remarkable open mind toward other cultures" (Classen, 2002, p. xvi). Immigrants to England during that time held many different positions and jobs within their new host country, coming as "agricultural labourers, as skilled cloth weavers, and as merchants involved in international trade" (Ormrod, 2015, para. 2). Ormrod (2015) tells the tale of a foreigner, Reginald Newports, as he was identified in English records of the 14th century, who was "for all intents and purposes . . . a full and active subject of

the English crown, a minor functionary in the royal household of Edward III, a property-holder in the city of London and Berkshire, and an influential public official" (para. 1). Though records during that time frame were not well kept, there was a movement circa 1370 to identify the foreign-born within the English borders as identified by a panel of English men within each regional area which at least provided historical information about them (Classen, 2002; Ormrod, 2015). Before this time, foreign-born workers in England often enjoyed the life of a native-born Englishman. In the 14th century, a formal process called *denization* was developed that allowed a foreign-born individual to renounce allegiance to the ruler of their homeland which allowed them to then embrace the English rule and enjoy the rights of native-born Englishman (Classen, 2002; Ormrod, 2015). Given the hefty financial costs associated with denization, however, it was generally pursued by more educated, skilled, and affluent immigrants (Ormrod, 2015) which today is often called professionals or highly-skilled workers.

Coming to America

In the course of its initial development of settler colonization, America not only welcomed but encouraged immigration, in particular from Europe, to help populate the vast, what was thought of as an almost empty land, of the new country (Daniels, 2002; P. Martin, 2014). Empty is a relative notion, when thinking of the many native tribes who already inhabited the continent and initially welcomed the European immigrants. The dispossession of their lands by the settlers took the lives of hundreds of thousands of the original inhabitants of the Americas. Spanish and French settlers began to make the United States their home as early as the 1500s (Gerber, 2011; Osborne, 2016). The English founded their first permanent settlement in 1607 at Jamestown in the Virginia colony (Gerber, 2011; Osborne, 2016). Over centuries, until the mid-19th century, millions of Africans were enslaved and brought to the United States in order to provide the labor needed for the plantation economy that settlers established in the

Southern parts of the United States. The settler immigration on the other hand was a move towards freedom. While stories of immigrants fleeing home countries in search of religious freedom are common (and to some extent true), most settlers came in search of economic freedom, not religious (Daniels, 2002; Osborne, 2016). About 100 Pilgrims seeking religious freedom settled in Plymouth, MA in 1620, followed in greater number by the Puritans, who also settled in Massachusetts between 1630–1640 with their numbers more around the 20,000 range (Daniels, 2002; Gerber, 2011; Osborne, 2016). Given the high cost of passage to the United States, more than half of White Europeans came as indentured servants. Because of the high death rates during this period, many servants died before gaining their freedom, but some records do exist of former indentured servants who attained not only their goal of obtaining their own plots of land, but social mobility and high levels of social standing, including seven members of the Virginia legislature, a secretary of the Continental Congress, and a Congressman from Vermont and Kentucky (Daniels, 2002; Osborne, 2016). The original colonies in Maryland included a large number of noblemen, much larger in number than the Virginia colonies, as well as two Jesuit priests (Daniels, 2002). The early colonies in New England were distinguished from others by virtue of being "organized into family groups, were possessed of a great deal of agricultural and craft skills, and most seemed to have enjoyed some degree of economic security in England" (Daniels, 2002, p. 44). Additionally, this group had a very high number of well-educated male leaders whose wives and daughters were also well-educated, though lacking in formal schooling (Daniels, 2002). While these early highly-educated immigrants were not the norm among colonists, they could be considered as early highly-skilled or what were termed in early part of the 20th century, "white-collar" (i.e., professional) immigrants to the United States.

Another large wave of immigrants arrived between 1815 and 1865 (Daniels, 2002; Osborne, 2016). A great famine in Ireland accounted for one-third of these mostly impoverished immigrants; between 1820 and 1930 4.5 million Irish immigrated to the United States. During this same time period, five million Germans immigrated to the United States, many of them settling in the Midwest. And during the mid-1800s, a large number of Asian immigrants arrived (Daniels, 2002; Gerber, 2011; Osborne, 2016). During the age of mass migration from Europe (1850–1920) more than 30 million people immigrated to the United States (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2017; Tabellini, 2018). During this timeframe, immigrants overall were less skilled than had been the case in the past; however, they provided the unskilled labor that spurred industrialization (Sequeira, Nunn, & Qian, 2020; Tabellini, 2018). It also resulted in a small but important group of skilled individuals whose knowledge and skills resulted in innovations which were not only beneficial to the United States economy, but important for industrial development (Hanlon, 2018; Sequeira et al., 2020). In one case study done on Newport News shipyards, immigrants were essential in providing "the transfer of scarce and vital skills needed in the production process that allowed the growth of new firms and industries" (Hanlon, 2018, p. 5).

The period between 1894 to 1910 was a time of great change for workers in the United States. The explosive growth of industrialism following the Civil War crumbled under the weight of the Depression of 1893, which found many plants closing their doors at the same time as an unprecedented number of immigrants came to this country, particularly from Eastern and Southern Europe (Daniels, 2002; Osborne, 2016). An increasing number of women joined in the workforce during this time and a greater number of professional jobs were created (Daniels, 2002; Gerber, 2011). In 1850—the first-year data was collected on nativity in the United States—10% of the nation, or 2.2 million people, were immigrants. That fluctuated between 13%

and 14.8% between 1860 and 1920 with the peak occurring in 1890. Strict immigration laws in

1921 and 1924, as well as WWII and the Great Depression, lead to a significant drop and a

steady decline in the number of immigrants, hitting an all-time low of 5% in 1970 (Daniels,

2002; Gerber, 2011; Zong, Batalova, & Hallock, 2020).

Highly-Skilled Immigrants

The study of immigrants has traditionally focused on the notion of immigrants as coming

from home countries that were suffering from economic or political hardship, mostly unskilled,

exploited and marginalized peoples from less advanced societies, forced into jobs considered

lower in status (Alba & Nee, 2003; Daniels, 2002; Gordon, 1964; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001;

Levitt, 2001; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2003; Smith & Guarnizo, 2017). While true in many

cases, not all migrants were (or are) unskilled and uneducated (Batalova & Lowell, 2007;

Lowell, 2010). Though there is no standard and agreed-upon definition of a migrant (Batalova &

Lowell, 2007; Castles, 2000; Castles & Davidson, 2000; Faist, 2000; Koser & Wilkinson, 2007;

Lowell, 2010), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

defined a "migrant as any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or

she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country" (as cited in

Laurent, 2019, para. 3). Another requirement for the term migrant, as defined by the United

Nations, is that moving from native countries must be a choice taken freely by the individual, for

the reason of personal convenience, and with no compulsion caused by external factor; the latter

means the person is a *refugee*. UNESCO breaks the type of migrants down even further, with one

class of migrants identified as highly skilled and business migrant who is,

> A person with qualifications as a manager, executive, professional, technician or similar,
> who moves within the internal labour markets of trans-national corporations and
> international organisations, or who seeks employment through international labour

markets for scarce skills. (as cited in European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs n.d., para. 1)

The United States Department of Homeland Security's definition of immigrant merely states "See permanent resident alien" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d., under section "I"). The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA, 1962) defined an immigrant as any alien in the United States, except if admitted under specific non-immigrant categories that are outlined in the Act's Section 1101(15).

Just as there is no single definition for *immigrant*, there is also no one definition for *highly-skilled immigrants* (Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Iredale, 2000; Lowell, 2010; Mahroum, 2000; Nishida, 2008; Tzeng, 2006). Research on highly-skilled immigrants tends to look at economic impact (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2017; Nishida, 2008; Sequeira et al., 2020). However, the increased globalization of business has furthered research in this area (Iredale, 2000; Lowell, 2010; Saxenian, 2006; Tzeng, 2006), and research studies have branched into other areas including global immigrants with high-status jobs in business or professionals in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) roles (Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Lowell, 2010; Nishida, 2008). In general, highly-skilled immigrants who come to the United States hold upper middle-class professional positions, and contribute to the economy are seen as creating a "win-win" situation—a win for the U.S. economy, and a win for the immigrant him- or herself (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2017; Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Lowell, 2010; Nishida, 2008; Sequeira et al., 2020).

It is often assumed that these highly-skilled professionals have higher levels of cultural adaptation to their host country and assimilate without much difficulty (Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Nishida, 2008; Osborne, 2016). This may or may not be the case, however. This dissertation has explored the lived experience of foreign-born highly-skilled professionals

working in the United States and will hope to uncover their experiences in cultural adaptation and assimilation, at least in reference to their ability to be creative in their work environments.

The numbers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the last 50 years has seen a shift in the demographic makeup of foreign-born populations coming to the United States from an older, mostly European population to a predominately younger, Latin American and Asian population (Grieco et al., 2012). In 1960, the immigrant-to-native ratio in the United States was one to 20; in 2012 that number had increased to one in eight (Grieco et al., 2012). Amendments to the Immigration Act of 1965—which removed the national quota system related to national origin —resulted in greater diversity of immigrant candidates and away from the traditional European countries of immigrants before the amendment (Congressional Budget Office, 2006; Vialet, 1991). The new law also "established a categorical preference system that prioritized admissions based on family relationships and needed skills" (Grieco et al., 2012, p. 3). The Act put limits on numbers of immigrants by hemisphere—170,000 from the Eastern Hemisphere and 150,000 from the Western. In 1978, however, this was combined to a general worldwide cap of 290,000 (Grieco et al., 2012). The Immigration Control and Reform Act of 1986 legalized approximately 2.7 million illegal immigrants then residing in the United States.

Further changes were made with the Immigration Act of 1990, which increased the immigrant cap from 290,000 to 675,000 for worldwide immigrants per year (Grieco et al., 2012; Rytina, 2002; Vialet, 1991). An increase was also made in the number of employment-based visas and relaxed admissions requirements for temporary skilled workers (Lowell, 2010). These changes have increased the size and percentage of foreign-born populations. In 1960, there were 9.7 million foreign-born in the United States representing 5% of the total United States population. By 2010, this had grown to 40 million or 12.9% of the total United States population

(Grieco et al., 2012), and 2016 found more than 44 million immigrants living in the United States or 13.5% of the total population (Zong et al., 2020). By 2017, 17.1% of the United States labor force was foreign-born. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), in 2017, of the 27.4 million foreign-born who were working in the United States, 36.2% held a bachelor's degree or higher. Though this is a smaller percentage of the overall foreign-born workforce, it is close to that of native-born workers holding the same degrees—40.5%. In 2017, 32.3% of management, professional, and related occupations and 15% of sales and office occupations were held by foreign-born workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). While immigrant workers only accounted for 17% of civilian employed workers in 2017 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018), they held much higher shares of certain occupations with 32% working in management, business, or science occupations (Zong et al., 2018). Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) showed occupation distribution of foreign-born workers versus native born in 2017, with a full 32.3% of foreign-born workers holding management or professional roles.

Numbers of skilled visas. Legislation in the last two decades, including the Immigration Act of 1990, "facilitated the immigration of college-educated individuals to the United States by creating temporary visa programs for high-skilled workers . . . especially those in science, technology, engineering, and math fields" (Zong & Batalova, 2016, para.1).The H-1B Temporary Skilled Worker Program, created under the Immigration Act of 1990, was created to allow highly-skilled foreign nationals to work for United States organizations in the United States in positions that are considered "specialty occupations" and is the most common skill-based visa used for employment by foreign nationals who are college educated (Batalova, 2010; Lowell, 2010; Zong & Batalova, 2016).

Temporary foreign-born workers had been coming to the United States to work dating as far back as the 1800s. Many of these were unskilled and came to work on building of the railroad, to the gold mines in California, or in other unskilled positions. The door for unskilled temporary foreign labor was closed in 1885 when Congress passed the first national contract labor law, but this continued to allow skilled workers in certain occupations such as lecturers and entertainers (Batalova, 2010; Lowell, 2010). In 1952, "the McCarren-Walter Act authorized the admission of temporary workers during labor shortages and began to differentiate between skilled and less-skilled temporary workers by creating the H-1 program for workers of 'distinguished merit and ability'" (Batalova, 2010, section 1). The H-1B visa is valid for up to three years of employment in the United States and can be extended for another three years; as of 2018, the annual cap for new H-1B visas was 85,000, with 20,000 of these visas held specifically for those who hold advanced degrees from United States universities (Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Pierce & Gelatt, 2018). H-1B highly skilled visas were given to 345,262 individuals in 2016 (Pierce & Gelatt, 2018). In 2014, 70% of H-1B visas were from India.

The H-1B Visa has been used to admit large numbers of professional workers, often in STEM fields and particularly information technology (IT), but other visas also allow for highly skilled workers to enter the United States workforce (Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Lowell, 2010).

Immigrant contributions. In our current political climate, backlash against immigration has appeared to increase and it seems that open display of hostility to foreign-born individuals have become more commonplace (Sherkat & Lehman, 2018). Resentment towards immigrants is not new, however. Even in the earliest periods of American history, there is evidence of resistance to certain groups of immigrants or certain countries of origin (Daniels, 2002; Gerber, 2011; Osborne, 2016). The impact of immigrants on the United States has received a great deal

of attention, usually focusing on the short-term effects of immigration on society leaving a gap in knowledge pertaining to the long-term effects (W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015; Sequeira et al., 2020; Tabellini, 2018). Despite well-publicized fears that immigrants have negative impacts on job security and economic well-being of United States natives (i.e., those born and raised in the United States) and society as a whole, current research shows a different story (W.R. Kerr, 2013; W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015; Moser, Voena, & Waldinger, 2014; Sequeira et al., 2020; Tabellini, 2018). According to W. R. Kerr's (2013) review of literature on global migration of talented immigrants, there were fewer than 50 academic articles that touched on the link between immigration and innovation in the United States. Yet in 2015, when nearly one-fourth of all science and engineering professionals in the United States holding bachelor's degrees were immigrants, there were very few detailed academic studies exploring the quantity and quality of immigrants contributions in STEM roles and entrepreneurship (S. P. Kerr, Kerr, & Lincoln, 2015; W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015).

Impact to society. Immigrants to the United States are heterogeneous, coming from multiple home locations with different cultures, languages, level of education and skills. The same is true for those born in the United States. Thus, "understanding the complexities of the economic relationships between native-born and immigrant workers is key to delineating the impact of high-skilled immigration on natives" (Kaushal & Fix, 2006, p. 12). Studies on long-term effects of the mass migration (1850–1920) showed increased employment and occupational standing for native-born, in particular White male, Americans both short- and long-term (W. R. Kerr, 2013; Tabellini, 2018); this was despite current rhetoric that increased immigrants means decreased job opportunities for natives. According to Tabellini (2018), "Immigration increased natives' employment and occupational standing, and fostered industrial

production and capital utilization" (p. 1). Studying the political and economic impact of immigration between 1910 and 1930, Tabellini (2018) concluded that immigration had a significant and positive effect on the employment and economic standing of White male natives. however, despite the clear economic benefits, produced political reactions hostile in nature, resulting in a rise to power of more conservative legislators who, in turn, supported laws restricting immigration. Further study in this area concluded that the higher the real or imagined cultural distance between the immigrants in question and natives, the higher the backlash (S. P. Kerr et al., 2015; W. R. Kerr, 2013; Tabellini, 2018)—though research also showed that the higher the distance in cultural norms of natives, the more the economic gains (Tabellini, 2018). In their study of the long-term effects of large-scale immigration at the time of mass migration (identifying that period as 1860–1920), Sequeira et al. (2020) found that areas and counties with the largest populations of immigrant settlers today have higher incomes, less poverty, higher rates of industrialization, less unemployment, and greater educational attainment. These long-term gains were the result of sizable short-term benefits including industrialization, innovation, and specialized skills that facilitated the emergence of new firms and industries which ultimately resulted in employment and growth opportunities for natives (Foley & Kerr, 2013; Hanlon, 2018; Islam, Islam, & Nguyen, 2017; S. P. Kerr et al., 2015; W. R. Kerr, 2013; W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015; Sequeira et al., 2020; Stephan & Levin, 2001; Tabellini, 2018).

Studies have shown that immigrants contribute substantially in terms of innovation, entrepreneurship, and progress in technology (Islam et al., 2017; S. P. Kerr et al., 2015; W. R. Kerr, 2013). This, in turn, has provided opportunities for native-born Americans, rather than making them compete for a fixed quantity of opportunities. Despite fears to the contrary among many generations of U.S.-born Americans, immigration has had a positive impact on economic

growth both at the societal and individual levels (Islam et al., 2017; S. P. Kerr et al., 2015; W. R. Kerr, 2013; Sequeira et al., 2020; Stephan & Levin, 2001; Tabellini, 2018).

Current research on highly-skilled immigrants into the United States has focused on these aspects:

- Economic and wage implications for U.S.-born natives, both short and long-term, which show long-term economic benefits in wages, industrialization, and growth opportunities for United States natives (Islam et al., 2017; W. R. Kerr, 2013; W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015; Moser et al., 2014; Sequeira et al., 2020; Tabellini, 2018);

- immigrant contributions to STEM fields where over 25% of roles are held by immigrants and major science advancements can be traced to an influx of immigrants from various source countries, notably Jewish emigres from Nazi Germany (Foley & Kerr, 2013; Hunt & Gauthier-Loiselle, 2010; W. R. Kerr, 2013; W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015; Moser et al., 2014; Stephan & Levin, 2001); and

- immigration, innovation, and entrepreneurship, showing a disproportionate number of Nobel-prize winners, entrepreneurs—particularly in the technology space, and patent holders (Foley & Kerr, 2013; Islam et al., 2017; S. P. Kerr et al., 2015; W. R. Kerr, 2013; W. R. Kerr & Turner, 2015). Empirical research over the last decade has made great strides in developing a more complete understanding of the impact of skilled immigrants on United States society and economy, especially as we continue to face backlash and potentially changing policy.

W. R. Kerr (2013), having reviewed research on the "brain gain" for the United States from H-1B visa holders, called for "more research and modeling . . . to add this up" (p. 22). Additionally, researching highly-skilled immigrants within the context of the firms for which

they are employed will bring additional depth and nuance to the data and impact of immigration (S. P. Kerr et al., 2015). And while the research clearly shows that the United States economy has been positively impacted by the in-flow of foreign-born talent, additional research can be done to show the impact this immigration has on the source countries (W. R. Kerr, 2013; Stephan & Levin, 2001).

Ethnic Culture

Team members increasingly come from different ethnic cultures, backgrounds and outlooks. Culture refers to the shared behavior patterns of doing which come from a shared way of thinking that differentiate one group from another (Booysen, 2016; Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 2010; House, Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, & Sully de Luque, 2014; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). The 1980 Mexico City World Conference on Cultural Policies agreed on the following definition of culture:

> In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. (UNESCO, 1982, para. 6)

Though there are numerous variants on the definition of culture, there is agreement on the multi-faceted nature of culture as containing values, norms, and practices that are shared and meta-situational (Ferdman & Sagiv, 2012). Culture represents the way in which the environment—both social and physical—is interpreted, explained, and shared amongst its members (Ferdman & Sagiv, 2012; Hofstede, 1981/2001; Schwartz, 2009; Triandis, 1994, 2001). This base is important when looking more deeply at any area of culture and multicultural research, including the interactions of individuals working in a global workforce that represents many different cultures from around the world. Parekh (2006) described it eloquently:

Being concerned to structure and order human life, culture is also articulated in the rules and norms that govern such basic activities and social relations as how, where, when and with whom one eats, associates and makes love, how one mourns and disposes of the dead, and treats one's parents, children, wife, neighbours, and strangers. (p. 144)

Booysen (2016) said culture is about groups and is a truly collective phenomenon. Under that higher-level umbrella called culture, there are many different sub-cultures or groups/categories that can and do impact how an individual human behaves (Booysen, 2016). This means that cultural measures alone are not an adequate predictor of an individual's behavior, but a better predictor of the overall cultural group (Booysen, 2016; Hofstede et al., 2010; House et al., 2014; House et al., 2004). Hofstede's (1980, 2001) stressed the need to characterize cultures—not the individuals within cultures. The sub-categories within each culture—race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation—influence an individual's perceptions, and, therefore, their actions as well as their individual personality traits (Booysen, 2016; Schwartz, 2009). Individual and societal level values, as outlined by Schwartz (2009), reflected these differences. Scholars in the field of cross-cultural research (Booysen, 2016; Hofstede et al., 2010; House et al., 2014; House et al., 2004; Parekh, 2006) state that though culture can predict leadership and followership expectations, it is unreliable in predicting the behavior of an individual from within the cultural group, given the multiple other dimensions which influence individual behavior (Booysen, 2016; Hofstede et al., 2010; House et al., 2014). This means the following:

- Culture is about groups;

- It is a collective phenomenon, and not about individual behavior;

- There are wide variations in individual values and behavior within each culture; and

- There are also numerous shared similarities across cultures. (Booysen, 2016, p. 363)

Additionally, the way culture is interpreted and experienced varies based on the individual. This is an important distinction, as individuals working within an organization may all have unique approaches, outlooks, and perceptions even if they are from the same ethnic group because of these different sub-categories within culture itself (Booysen, 2016; Hannum, McFeeters, & Booysen, 2010). Conversely, it is also important to keep in mind that leader/follower expectations can and are shaped by cultural influences (Booysen, 2016), and have a demonstrated impact on an individual's experiences and perceptions of experiences in the workplace, including feeling isolated and a lack of one-on-one relationships (Chrobot-Mason, 2004; Findler, Wind, & Mor Barak, 2007; Ibarra, 1995; J. R. Jones & Schaubroeck, 2004; Mor Barak & Levin, 2002).

Culture Theories and Studies

The landscape of cultural theories includes social identity theory. Social identity theory describes the phenomenon of in-groups and out-groups that may be described in the focus area of my study through the lived experience of my participants. It lays the groundwork for these experiences to be explored further.

Social identity theory. Social identity theory is a cognitive social psychological theory which provides a connection between national culture, the social category backgrounds of an individual, and an individual's personality, which coalesce into an individual's cultural constellation (Booysen, 2016; Ellemers & Haslam, 2012; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity refers to a person's sense of self through their affiliation with various group memberships (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Findler et al., 2007; Schwarzwald, Koslowsky, & Allouf, 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Vallas, 2003). In order for an individual to develop an affinity for a particular social group or a social identity within that group, they must place a high level of value

on the group in question as well as an emotional significance (Ely, 1994; Findler et al., 2007; Tajfel, 1978; Wharton, 1992). Humans classify individuals into groups or categories not just to identify *them*, but also as a way of determining who *we* are and who we are not (Chao & Moon, 2005). Tajfel (1982) defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 255). Identifying with groups helps individuals to develop a stronger sense of self, thereby reducing uncertainty of identity by using the group's values as a guide (Chao & Moon, 2005).

According to Chao and Moon (2005), cultural identity and social identity share a common foundation but are not the same. Studies in social identity theory have shown identifying with a group needs only nominal linkages, which can be about anything, in order to develop a favoritism toward in-group members and display discrimination against out-group members, even if there was no benefit to the group member to do so and even if there are no or relatively little similarities amongst the in-group members (Chao & Moon, 2005; J. C. Turner, 1982). Whether a (temporary) social group formation becomes part of social identity probably depends on meaningfulness of the unifying factor for those involved. Cultures or cultural identity, conversely, are historically-rooted, value-based and comprise of interpersonal similarities (Chao & Moon, 2005).

Culture's consequences. The nature and experience of (national/ethnic) culture difference in an organizational context are central in the proposed study. One of the pioneers in this area is Geert Hofstede. In his groundbreaking work, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values*, *Behaviors*, *Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*, he analyzed the values held by individuals in 70 nations who were working for IBM (Hofstede, 1981/2001). Hofstede

(1981/2001) supported the study of national cultures saying, "the survival of mankind will depend to a large extent on the ability of people who think differently to act together" (p. xv). Hofstede directed the creation and launch of a large multinational survey with the express purpose of understanding these cultural differences among IBM employees. These surveys were delivered as paper-and-pencil surveys which resulted in the identification of, at first four cultural dimensions. Later this evolved into five dimensions, and more recently into six (Hofstede, 2018). The initial four were power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and collectivism, and masculinity and femininity. Later, Hofstede (1981/2001) added long- versus short-term orientation as a fifth dimension and even later added indulgence versus restraint (2018). This research is significant to my area of study in the respect that the cultural responses and approaches identified by Hofstede do not stop at the borders of a country; when an individual immigrates to a new country, their cultural norms are part of them and make that immigration with them. Their interactions and reactions in the workplace are influenced by the culture of their country of origin. Though Hofstede's work is highly in-depth and renowned, one of the shortcomings of his work was the exclusion of African cultures and organizations, which was addressed in the more inclusive Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Study.

The GLOBE Study. The GLOBE Study was the culmination of a 10-year research program based on the responses of around 17,000 middle managers from 951 organizations residing in 62 societies (House et al., 2004). Building on the existing work of Hofstede (1980), the GLOBE study was the brainchild of Robert House of the Wharton School of Business in 1991. The study was conducted by 170 investigators from 62 countries, and 20 of these contributed to writing the first GLOBE Study publication *Culture*, *Leadership*, *and Organizations* (edited by House et al., 2004), which has been

described as "the most comprehensive empirical cross-cultural leadership study to date" (Booysen, 2016, p. 365). According to House (2004), "The major purpose of Project GLOBE is to increase available knowledge that is relevant to cross-cultural interactions" (p. 3).

The GLOBE project reports on empirical findings of the 62 studied societies with respect to nine attributes based on their cultures, as well as reports "the findings of these attributes on what is expected of leaders, and the effects of these attributes on organizational practices in each of the societies studied" (House et al., 2004, p. 3). There are nine cultural dimensions identified in the GLOBE Project, the first six of which were built upon Hofstede's (1980, 1981/2001) dimensions of culture (House et al., 2004). Other dimensions drew on the work of Triandis (1994), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Hofstede and Bond (1988), Putnam (2000, 2007), Mulder (1971), and Cyert and March (1963).

In House et al.'s (2004) edited volume about GLOBE, Hanges and Dickson (2004) reported 21 primary leadership attributes that were universally identified as contributing to leadership effectiveness and another eight as impediments to leadership effectiveness. Additionally, there were 35 behaviors or attributes identified that in some cultures were considered contributors to leadership effectiveness and in others were viewed as impediments to leadership effectiveness. Finally, six global leadership behaviors or dimensions were identified. For the 21 primary global leadership attributes or behaviors considered as a contributor to leadership effectiveness, it is important to keep in mind the expression of these traits may be noticeably different from culture to culture and requires an individual who may be working cross-culturally to make themselves aware of the cultural expression of each trait.

The GLOBE study team found the perception of effective versus ineffective leader behaviors varied widely dependent upon country/region of origin. Ultimately, the practices that

occur within the operationally and/or at the managerial levels reflect the culture/society in which they function, even with the identified global leadership behaviors (House et al., 2004). As discussed in my review of Hofstede's (1981/2001) study, the cultural attributes are part of how an individual reacts and, perhaps more importantly, views the world. Their perception of what is right or wrong, effective versus ineffective, and so on can and does extend into what they see as a support rather than an inhibitor of creative output in the workplace. The GLOBE Study looked more holistically at the culture level versus the individual level, which is the focus of my study.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is everywhere in organizational life. A vitally important component of organizations, organizational culture has been defined by multiple experts during the 20th century. Organizational culture can be influenced by the national/ethnic values of the dominant group, but it is a different concept than societal or ethnic culture and the individual preferences that make up personal culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The history of the theory of organizational culture is significant in many ways, including a shift from mostly quantitative methods of conducting research to the inclusion and acceptance of qualitative methods in the organizational theory space (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

History of organizational culture theory. Early use of the word "culture" referred to cultivation of crops and it was not until the 19th century when the term began to be applied to the cultivation of humans through the emergence of the disciplines of anthropology and sociology (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Some of the earliest definitions of culture focused on the characteristic differences between humans and other species, such as the definition of culture from social anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1878/1958): "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by

man as a member of society" (p. 1). As the study of humans under the umbrella term culture

advanced to direct observation and documentation of so-called primitive cultures throughout the

world (and the subsequent realization that "primitive" is in the eye of the beholder), the concept

of culture began to be associated with the particular groups of people being studied and the

associated comparisons between them resulting in the identification of distinctive characteristics

of groups which were then labeled as "cultural differences" (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Seventy

years after Tylor's definition, American cultural anthropologist Herskowitz (1948) defined

culture as "a construct describing the total body of belief, behavior, knowledge, sanctions,

values, and goals that make up the way of life of a people" (p. 625).

In 1952, with the publication of *The Changing Culture of a Factory*, Elliott Jaques

introduced the concept of culture in relation to organizations (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe,

2006). He argued that the focus of organization studies had been so strongly on structure that the

human element and its implications were lost—something which he intended to change. His

book inspired other researchers in the area of organizational studies to study organizational

symbolism, and, by the early 1970s, organizational culture studies began to appear through the

work of Clark (1972), Pettigrew (1979), Trice, Belasco, and Alutto (1969) and B. A. Turner

(1971). It was not until the 1980s, though, that the organizational culture concept took root with

management scholars such as Deal and Kennedy (1982), Kilmann, Saxton, and Serpa (1985),

Ouchi (1981), Pascale and Athos (1982), Peters and Waterman (1982), and Sathe (1985).

Organizational studies experienced great interest in the study of organizational culture in the

1970s, with some authors citing Japanese success in business when compared with perceived

United States failures as culturally related (J. Martin, Frost, & O'Neill, 2006). The concept of

organizational culture gained an even greater foothold with the appearance of several books on

the topic reaching the bestseller lists in the United States primarily written for executive audiences including Deal and Kennedy's (1982) *Corporate Culture: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* and Peters and Waterman's (1982) *In Search of Excellence*, which topped the New York Times best seller list for months. Önday (2016) listed additional books which, while less in the spotlight, also had an impact on the interest in organizational culture including Ouchi's (1981) *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge*, and Pascale and Athos's (1982) *The Art of Japanese Management: Applications for American Executives.*

This acclaim was a surprise to the academic community. Those who found the topic of interest read and studied available materials, in particular the more academic book *Organizational Culture and Leadership* by Edgar Schein in 1985 (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Önday, 2016). Schein did extensive work in the area and, unlike other researchers at that time, also produced a conceptual framework for analyzing organizational culture in the 1980s, as well as methods to intervene or change existing organizational culture (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1983, 1984, 1985). Schein's work has become a baseline for many other researchers (Bartlett, 2014; Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

As interest in the concept of organizational culture grew, so did discussions on the best way to measure and/or investigate its characteristics. While the interest started small, it drew from various other areas of research including psychology and organizational theory (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Önday, 2016). Some researchers felt the need to move from the quantitative approaches preferred by most modernists to using qualitative methods such as ethnography in order to conduct their empirical studies as a way to delve more deeply and uncover the crucial aspects of organizational culture that were largely invisible (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe,

2006; Önday, 2016). This resulted in a "war" of sorts between the modernists' view of the superiority of quantitative methods and the symbolic-interpretive researchers' view of the necessity—and legitimacy—of qualitative approaches. Initially, the modernists held the majority but, along the way, symbolic-interpretive organization theory researchers positioned themselves more strongly while obtaining tenure as well as respect (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Not all researchers in the area of organizational culture embraced and utilized qualitative methods, however. Some of the early theories were still rooted in quantitative methods (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

Definitions of organizational culture. Table 2.1 shows a small sampling of definitions of organizational culture from various scholars. Despite the large number of existing definitions, there are some recurring or similar themes within them. One recurring element is that organizational culture is something shared, which is no surprise, given that the notion of culture itself refers to shared qualities. Additionally, many definitions share the common themes of values, beliefs, and norms that influence how people interact and behave within an organization. G. R. Jones (2007), for example, defined organizational culture as "the set of shared values and norms that control organizational members' interactions with each other and with suppliers, customers, and other people outside the organization" (p. 177).

The culture of organizations has been described as a "social glue" (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 18), a binding element which ties players (employees) within that organization together through a shared goal, values, or purpose. Hofstede et al. (2010) agreed that organizational culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others" (p. 6). These attitudes, values, behavioral norms, and expectations shared across a group of people working together, are often the bedrock of the definitions of

organizational culture. Others have distilled the definition of organizational culture down to a succinct "how things are around here" in an organization (Glisson & James, 2002). While these definitions are not exactly the same, they all share the common themes of values, beliefs, and norms that influence how people interact and behave within an organization.

Table 2.1

Definitions of Organizational Culture

Source	Definition
Pettigrew (1979)	The culture of the factory is its customary and traditional way of thinking and doing of things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all of its members, and which new members must learn, and at least partially accept, in order to be accepted into service in the firm. (p. 251)
Deal and Kennedy (1982)	"The way we do things around here" (p. 4).
Schein (1984)	The pattern of basic assumptions which a group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 3)
Van Maanen (1988)	Culture refers to the knowledge members of a given group are thought to more or less share; knowledge of the sort that is said to inform, embed, shape, and account for the routine and not-so-routine activities of the members of the culture. . . . A culture is expressed (or constituted) only through the actions and words of its members and must be interpreted by, not given to, a fieldworker . . . Culture is not itself visible, but is made visible only through its representation. (p. 3)
Kotter and Heskett (1992)	Culture refers to the values that are shared by the people in a group and that tend to persist over time even when the group membership changes . . . At this level culture can be extremely difficult to change, in part because group members are often unaware of many of the values that bind them together. (p. 142)
Denison (1996)	"The deep structure of organizations, which is rooted in the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by organizational members" (p. 624).
Cameron and Quinn (2011)	Culture is a socially constructed attribute of organizations that serves as the social glue binding an organization together . . . it encompasses the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories, and definitions present in an organization. (pp. 18–19)

The study of organizational culture—and subsequent sharing of the knowledge gained through that study—is not clear-cut or easy. Schein (1990) pointed out that writing about organizational culture was itself a dilemma in that there was little agreement "on what the concept does and should mean, how it should be observed and measured, how it relates to traditional and organizational psychology theories, and how it should be used in our efforts to help organizations" (p. 109). This has remained a complication throughout the study of organizational culture and subsequent development models and representations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1983).

Schein's work on organizational culture. According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) one of the best known and most recognized names in the study of organizational culture is Edgar Schein. With the publication of *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Schein (1985) became a source of information for both academic researchers and laypeople in the field of organization theory (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Önday, 2016).

According to Schein, at the core of organizational culture are basic assumptions, which then appear in the values and norms that are the lived experience of employees within an organization. Schein detailed three levels where culture exists simultaneously: artifacts, values, and assumptions. Schein (1985) suggested that the base level—the assumptions—are taken-for-granted beliefs or what members of a culture believe to be true in their reality. These are unquestioned aspects of the culture, in many ways because they exist below the conscious surface or awareness of the individual living within that cultural reality. Though these assumptions may be invisible to those who live them, they are still powerful enough to influence all aspects of the cultural life and human experience within the organization (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1985).

The next level Schein (1985) posited—values—holds intrinsic worth to the members of the culture. Values are embodied in principles, goals, and standards that are practiced within the organization. Even though values are more readily accessible in the consciousness of a culture's members they are not necessarily on their minds, though members are generally able to articulate organizational values. Values guide the members of the culture in the identification of what is considered right or wrong and establish the cultural norms by which people behave. Culture members are often sensitive to challenges to these values (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1985). Norms and values produce cultural artifacts, the final level and the only truly visible level of the three. Though artifacts are visible, they are often undecipherable. They are meant to be tangible indicators of values, norms, and assumptions but in order to truly recognize the cultural patterns an artifact must be observed, as well as the way in which a culture's members use them (Hatch, 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Schein, 1985).

In *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*, Schein (2009) warned about defining organizational culture as a mere manifestation of culture, which would be much like a doctor treating the symptoms of a disease rather than going deeper to discover the underlying reason for the symptoms. Schein (2009) pointed out that rites and rituals mean "just how things are done around here" (p. 21); basic values of a company are nothing more than the symptoms of the culture and not the culture itself. Rather, he advocated looking at organizational culture at the three levels, "from the very visible to the very tacit and invisible" (Schein, 2009, p. 21). Each level holds part of the key to unlocking the mystery of an organization's culture. Artifacts are those structures and processes that are very visible in an organization yet are hard to decipher. Schein (1990) cautioned that "the problem with artifacts is that they are palpable but hard to decipher" (p. 114), but that doesn't really tell you what you need to know to identify the culture;

instead, all it shows is the manifestation of the culture. Going deeper—asking questions, probing, with those who are on the inside—will bring a researcher to the next level of culture, "espoused values," Schein's second level. By questioning why manifestations are the way they are, one begins to learn "that the organization has certain values that are supposed to create an image of the organization" (Schein, 2009, p. 23).

Organizations may be in the practice of writing up vision, mission, and values sheets, which may be hung on walls or handed out to new employees. Viewing the values and comparing them to observed behavior at times may show them to be at odds, because a value identified in writing can be completely different than the way things are done in actual practice. "What these inconsistencies are telling you is that a deeper level of thought and perception is driving the overt behavior" (Schein, 2009, p. 25), the need exists to dig deeper to understand why.

The final level, according to Schein (2009), is that of shared tacit assumptions. This level of inquiry requires going back in time to review the values and beliefs of the founders and to trace back what beliefs were held that made the company successful as they started out, the values then passed down as new people were brought on board. This level of culture is invisible and unconscious, a set of beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that are taken for granted. The more successful the company is based on these level three beliefs, the more rooted they become in the organization's culture.

Organizations as metaphors. As Schein (1990, 2009) noted, speaking about organizational culture is difficult, for culture is not easy to define. Similarly, explaining how organizations work is difficult. Gareth Morgan (1986) used a series of metaphors to describe the workings of organizations. According to Morgan, metaphors allow us to deepen our

understanding and stretch our thinking in order to see things in new ways; however, these metaphors can also create distortions. He said, "Any theory or perspective that we bring to the study of organization and management, while capable of creating valuable insights, is also incomplete, biased, and potentially misleading" (Morgan, 2006, p. 4). Morgan identified eight organizational metaphors. Each begins with the prompt of "organizations as," followed by machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, and instruments of domination.

Using these metaphors, Morgan (2006) sought to explain the inner workings of organizations. In terms of organizations as cultures, he stated that organizations are themselves a cultural phenomenon highly influenced by the stage of development of a society—and that culture varies between societies. In modern societies, much of everyday life is centered around the work environment regardless of geographic location. This does not mean, however, that all ostensibly modern societies view, interact with, and respond to organizations in the same way. As Morgan pointed out, cross-national influences on organizational culture must not be ignored. Using the example of Japan, he noted the organization there is viewed as a collective rather than merely a workplace; a sense of belonging is pervasive resulting in more of a focus on interdependence and mutual help. Thus, what may be unacceptable from a Western perspective may not only be acceptable but expected; this is one reason why it is difficult to judge a culture from the outside looking in. National culture shapes organizational culture and, as such, in the United States, one is more likely to find a focus on competitive individualism.

Organizations have and display their own culture and, within that, sub-cultures. These varied beliefs, coupled with operational patterns of behavior or rituals, have a direct impact on the ability of the organization to handle challenges. Morgan (2006) suggested that the best way

to understand an organization's culture and sub-cultures is to observe the day-to-day lived experience from the perspective of an outsider.

Becoming aware of the nature of interactions between people, the language patterns that are adopted, and the daily routines is the first step; uncovering the rationale behind them is the next. These types of observations are essential in identifying the driving culture of an organization. Knowing culture is created and sustained by values, symbols, rituals, and images allows the observer the chance to dive more deeply into the meanings provided by each. In some cases, the values stated and the values lived may be at odds. "In any organization there may be competing value systems that create a mosaic of organizational realities rather than a uniform corporate culture" (Morgan, 2006, p. 132).

Culture formation. But how does this culture come into being in the first place? According to G. R. Jones (2007), organizational culture is a product of four factors: people, ethics, property rights, and organizational structure. The beliefs and values of an organization's founder has a major impact on the initial culture of an organization. Those who join the organization in the early stages more than likely share similar values and/or interests with the founder. G. R. Jones argued that this further establishes this culture and, as new employees come on board, they are socialized to the values, norms, and rituals established in the organization. The process of socialization is how new members learn and internalize an organization's culture.

This viewpoint on how organizational culture is transmitted is echoed by other authors. In *Behavior in Organizations*, Greenberg (2011) noted, "organizational culture may be traced, at least in part, to the founders of the company" (p. 553). Greenberg went on to show how the founder(s) influences organizational culture in four steps. In step 1, the founder has a new idea for a business; this is the genesis of culture. In step 2, the founder brings in others who share

his/her thoughts, vision, and goals for the business. This sharing of the vision is an essential step, and again, a logical one as the founder(s) would want to bring in those who embrace the new concept wholeheartedly. In step 3, these parties work together to develop the business. And finally, at step 4, others are brought in later as the company grows and are introduced to the business by sharing the original vision and the company's story (Greenberg, 2011, p. 553). While the linear representation described by Greenberg probably captures key elements of organizational development, in reality the process might be fuzzier than these neat stages suggest.

Along this same line of thought, Schein (2009) explained the influence of the founder(s) on a new organization by pointing out that when first starting out, they "have the opportunity to begin the culture creation process by imposing the beliefs, values, and assumptions onto new employees. If the new organization succeeds, then its cultural elements become shared and constitute the emerging culture of that organization" (p. 3).

The second method of culture creation in organizations is that of external influence (Greenberg, 2011). As organizations face certain events or stressors in their external sphere, these experiences become part of what is known as organizational memory. These memories and the subsequent behaviors or processes that develop in response to them are then shared throughout the organization and become a value or norm; a value or an organizational behavior that would seem odd to an outsider but was originally developed as a response to an organizational stressor become part of the base culture for the organization.

Schein (2009) pointed out that young organizations are led by the "personal beliefs, assumptions, and values of the entrepreneur or founder" (p. 123) which are then disseminated to those subsequently hired. If there is some measure of success within the organization, these

assumptions "come to be shared, seen as correct, and eventually taken for granted" (Schein, 2009, p. 123). These, in turn, become a way of defining the organization—both to internal employees and the outside world. If the new organization can hire people who already hold those same values and who think and behave in line with the organization's culture, there is less need for the unlearning and relearning of new employees as they uphold and strengthen the culture. If employees are hired who are not in line or close to the established values of an organization, they may find themselves in cultural conflict with the organization. This can result in either the employee becoming socialized and acculturated, or the employee leaving the organization. After all, if value sharing and commonality is crucial to the very nature of the organization and binding between its members, it can feel to existing members as if they lose something or face a threat if the new member does not join in the sharing.

It is also noteworthy that while a company is in the growth period, subcultures and countercultures can also begin to evolve, often in response to a lack of stability or mixed signals from the top (Schein, 2009). This is particularly true as an organization grows larger or continues to bring in employees who are not a perfect match for the established organizational cultural norms and who, themselves, must find a way to survive.

Values and organizational culture. The word "values" appears prominently in the definitions of organizational culture. Denison (1996) defined organizational culture as "the deep structure of organizations, which is rooted in the values, beliefs, and assumptions held by organizational members" (p. 624). He went on to address how meaning is developed within a culture as "through socialization to a variety of identity groups that converge in the workplace" (p. 624). Kotter and Heskett (1992) defined organizational culture on two levels broken out by

visibility and resistance to change—the deeper, less visible and the more visible levels. Of the deeper level, Kotter and Heskett (1992) said,

> Culture refers to the values that are shared by the people in a group and that tend to persist over time even when the group membership changes . . . At this level culture can be extremely difficult to change, in part because group members are often unaware of many of the values that bind them together. (p. 4)

Moving to the more visible manifestations, they pointed out that

> culture represents the behavior patterns or style of an organization that new employees are automatically encouraged to follow by their fellow employees . . . Culture, in this sense, is still tough to change, but not nearly as difficult as at the level of basic values. (Kotter & Heskett, 1992, p. 4)

In both these definitions, the concept of values plays a predominant role. It refers to fundamental beliefs about what is deemed important for the organization to exist and to be sustained. Shared understanding of these values is crucial so that the full definition of organizational culture would not be ambiguous or different depending on individual understandings of the word values. Assuming mutual agreement on this can cause conflict. If values are the bedrock on which an organizational culture is built, it is essential to clearly name what they stand for.

Cameron and Quinn (2011) identified "two main disciplinary foundations of organizational culture . . . sociological (organizations *have* cultures) and anthropological (organizations *are* cultures)" (p. 18). Through review of the literature, they determined that most scholars agree that the concept of culture "refers to the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, and definitions that characterize organizations and their members" (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 18). Creativity is one of these values. Part of organizational culture are expectations about creativity, its place in the organization and how it gets encouraged in the workplace.

Creativity in the Workplace

For years, from my own experience and what I have heard from other corporate employees, companies have had a similar refrain—"We need you to be creative, we need you to innovate, we need to be two (or 10) steps ahead of our competition." All seemed to acknowledge—or at least imply—that to be successful (or the most successful), companies need their employees to be creative. They need them to be innovative. But what it means to be creative and what that looks like is not always clearly defined by the organization. Indeed, many experts on creativity describe it as a process of developing ideas that are both unique and useful (Amabile, 1996; Burkus, 2013). Staying competitive is in many ways dependent on an organization's ability to innovate (Burkus, 2013). "Scholarly attention to creativity and innovation has increased dramatically over the past 28 years; these closely related phenomena have emerged from the shadows of organizational behavior scholarship into the mainstream" (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 158). Amabile (1988) created a model that represented a theory of creativity and innovation in organizations that she called "the componential model" (p. 130). Her widely cited model attempted "a comprehensive description of both the process of individual creativity and the process of organizational innovation, as well as the ways in which the two are linked through mutual influence" (Amabile, 1988, p. 158).

The study of creativity prior to Amabile was generally focused on personality studies of creative individuals (Amabile, 1996; Sternerg & Lubart, 1999). Creativity was viewed as a special ability found in some individuals, and, thus, research was mostly about personality types of those identified or labeled as creative. As noted by Williams and Yang (1999), "The major focus in creativity research has been on the individual creator and his or her personality, traits, abilities, experiences, and thought processes" (p. 378). According to Hennessey (2015), "With the exception

of examining the productivity of teams, the empirical study of creativity was until recently almost exclusively focused at the level of the individual creator" (p. 194). What this thread of study was missing, however, was context. Noting that "the social environment can influence both the level and frequency of creative behavior" (Amabile et al., 1996, p. 1155), research began to look at the context of creativity and innovation. Additionally, the increased globalization of organizations and the workplace has given an additional need to consider cultural forces (Hennessey, 2015).

The use of the word context is particularly important to my research. When I started thinking, theorizing, and informally applying my idea of "contextual creativity" as a practitioner, I was not aware of Amabile's book *Creativity in Context* (1996). In fact, this need for context was so promising that Amabile et al. (1996) created a measurement instrument called "KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity" (p. 1154). Realizing that most previous research focused on creativity supports—work environments that appear to enhance creativity—Amabile et al. included impediments in KEYS scales, workplace factors that undermine creativity. They identified six support scales they believed would differentiate high-creativity and low-creativity climates:

1. organizational encouragement,

2. supervisory encouragement,

3. work group supports,

4. freedom,

5. sufficient resources, and

6. challenge.

Workload pressure and organizational impediments were identified as obstacles on the scale. Amabile's work (1998) focused on three ingredients for creativity: domain expertise, creative thinking skills, and intrinsic motivation. In more recent work, the componential model

has been re-examined and given a face-lift (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). In the updated componential model, there are four new or radically modified constructs. Taking into account research conducted after publishing the 1988 componential model, Amabile and Pratt (2016) further developed the original model to be inclusive of the subsequent theories. They also added what they called "dynamism" (p. 159) to their model by including the presence of a "progress loop . . . [which facilitates] repeated iterations through the creative process even in the face of failure" (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 159).

There are several key concepts that had emerged in creativity and innovation research after Amabile's original componential model (1988). These later theories and constructs added elements of dynamic interplay in what Amabile and Pratt (2016) called their "dynamic componential model" (p. 157). Each of these subsequent theories and research provided higher elements that "infuse additional dynamism into the creative process by proposing that multiple iterations through the process are almost inevitable" (p. 159). In 1990, Staw morphed the individual creativity portion of Amabile's componential model into a variation-selection framework, drawing upon Campbell's (1960) evolutionary model of creativity. In Staw's (1990) rework, idea alternatives are created and solutions chosen. Staw pointed out that work meaningfulness is important to the individual and will contribute to creativity (1990). Simonton (1999) later built on this concept.

Woodman, Sawyer, and Griffin (1993) researched and modeled the interactions between the individual and the situation in producing a creative outcome. They identified three levels of interactions: the individual, the group, and the organization. They pointed to evidence that group creativity is dependent upon the creativity of the individuals, but not by way of aggregation. Hargadon and Bechky (2006) also pointed to what they term "collective creativity" (p. 484), which

indicates that while some creative ideas can come from the mind of a single individual, others come from a momentary collaboration between multiple individuals. This is different than Amabile's (1988) componential model which assumed that small group creativity "operates essentially like the creativity of an individual" (Amabile & Pratt, 2016, p. 159). Drazin, Glynn, and Kazanjian (1999) looked more at long-term projects and creativity over a wide span of time.

Other researchers into creativity include Kanter (1988), who identified both supports and impediments to innovation. Kanter suggested that innovation was most likely to occur in organizations that have integrative structures, emphasis on diversity, multiple structural linkages inside and outside the organization, intersecting territories, collective pride and faith in people's talents, and which emphasize collaboration and teamwork. Kanter argued that segmentalism was a primary reason for the stifling of creativity.

In 1989, Van de Ven et al. brought forward an edited collection of studies on creativity and innovation for what was called the Minnesota Innovation Research Project. Within their edited volume about this, Angle (1989) had a chapter specifically on psychology and organizational innovation. Angle highlighted the importance of information flows within organizations. Summarizing Angle's work, McLean (2005) stated, "Expectations about the importance of communicating, the vehicles available for communicating, and the cues within the environment regarding with whom to communicate can determine how communication will influence innovation" (p. 233). What Angle (1989) discovered was that "innovation effectiveness was found to be related both to communication frequency within the innovation teams . . . and communication frequency outside the teams" (p. 144). The important thing to highlight was the frequency with which persons with dissimilar frames of reference communicated, resulting in an

exchange of ideas from different points of view that would influence the generation of new, creative ideas.

Creativity does not happen in a vacuum. There is a direct link between an individual's motivation toward a task and the likelihood they will perform creatively on the task, and "it is the environment, or at least certain aspects of the environment, that in large part determine motivational orientation" (Hennessey, 2015, p. 195). Of the two types of motivation—intrinsic and extrinsic—task engagement is generally constructed toward an intrinsically motivated orientation; that is, it is assumed that the person undertaking the task through an internal driver. This could be through natural curiosity or the challenge the task provides. When involved in the task and working through its challenges, the intrinsically motivated will likely feel a sense of accomplishment and skill or mastery. And individuals engaged in tasks where they feel their involvement is free of outside control, can begin to feel they are playing rather than working (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). This further supports Amabile's (1983, 1996) view that intrinsic motivation is almost always conducive to creative output and extrinsic motivation almost always has the opposite effect.

The fact that certain external circumstances or constraints served to undermine intrinsic motivation led to additional research to further explore the impact of these constraints on motivation and, therefore, creative performance. Researchers uncovered additional environmental constraints that were damaging to intrinsic motivation, including corporate mainstream practices such as deadlines, performance reviews, and interestingly, competition (Amabile, 1982; Amabile, Goldfarb, & Brackfield, 1990; Harackiewicz, Abrahams, & Wageman, 1991; Hennessey, 2015). This research indicated that the everyday constraints managers in workplaces impose upon their employees have a large and negative impact on their

creative performance and intrinsic motivation. In the past this realization led researchers to look

for internal (such as cognitive) reasons to explain why a reward system would actually be a

detriment to creativity (Hennessey, 2015). Moving past this, Hennessey (2015) embraced the

concept that outside factors influence the individual's creative approach and began to look at

larger outside forces. Hennessey labeled the first "Big-C," which refers to "the cultural values,

expectations, interpersonal and associated practices exhibited by entire nations, regions, or

groups" (p. 197). She labeled the second, "little-c," which was "the culture of specific

institutions or environments—most especially school environments and individual classroom

environments" (p. 197).

Though Hennessey's (2015) focus was on K–12 schools and school-age children, her

concepts are easily transferred to corporate work environments. She observed,

> We must start at the most basic level and ask how the culture into which we are born
> impacts our creative development and, perhaps even more importantly, set out to examine
> how our cultural background serves to frame the very way we conceive of creativity.
> (pp. 197–198)

Csikszentmihalyi (2009) agreed that creative acts are just as much based on social and

cultural influences as they are psychological or cognitive in nature, while Glăveanu (2016)

emphasized cultural expression as impacting every stage of the creative process.

Hennessey (2015) mapped the creative process as a flow, from Big-C culture—or "the

culture of an entire geographical region or ethnic group or subgroup or nation" (p. 205)—with

satellites of values, norms, power distance, social cognition, and psych of self. Hennessey noted

that these five components are not meant to represent an exhaustive list of investigable cultural

influences. The next filter is that of "little-c," the workplace (or, in her research case, classroom)

culture. The additional filter of individual differences comes directly before the triad of domain

expertise, task motivation, and problem solving. This mapping of the creative process leads this

review of the literature logically to the role of leadership in encouraging or discouraging creativity from happening. Where the literature addresses only innovation, it is assumed that this includes the preceding creative process.

Creativity and Leadership

The process of creativity is not a linear one and cannot be split into clearly defined phases and stages. "Instead, the requirements to generate [creativity] and implement [innovation] ideas alternate throughout the innovation process in an ever-changing manner" (Rosing, Frese, & Bausch, 2011, p. 957). Although there is controversy about the question of which behaviors of leaders most influence creativity (Zacher & Rosing, 2015), some scholars insist that "leadership is one of the most influential predictors of innovation" (Rosing et al., 2011, p. 956). Accordingly, there has been a great deal of research done on the topics of leadership and innovation (Bledow, Frese, & Mueller, 2011). Leadership is inherently part of the organizational culture, as leaders in general espouse and display the behaviors resulting from the culture of an organization. Rosing et al. (2011), finding that traditional leadership models "are too broad in nature to specifically promote innovation" (p. 957) argued, "The crucial feature of leadership for innovation is the fostering of either exploitation or exploration via the reduction or increase in the variance of follower behavior (p. 957). Exploitation—explained as adherence to rules, risk aversion, and alignment, and exploration—explained with descriptors such as risk taking, experimentation, and searching for alternatives—are both crucial to innovation. The word *exploitation*, which generally has a negative connotation, is unfortunate to use to represent a positive characteristic. In ambidextrous leadership theory, Rosing et al. (2011) concluded that exploitation and exploration are both essential to innovation and that a one-size-fits-all leadership approach is ineffective and potentially even detrimental to innovation. For leaders to be effective in the innovation space, they

need to be able to switch flexibly between exploration and exploitation. This approach of flexibility in leadership has been given the name *ambidextrous leadership* and is defined as "the ability to foster both explorative and exploitative behaviors in followers by increasing or reducing variance in their behavior and flexibly switching between those behaviors (Rosing et al., 2011, p. 957).

Bledow et al. (2011) looked at the effects of culture on innovation and the leadership theory presented. Clearly, there is no one nationality or ethnicity that has cornered the market on creativity and innovation. Innovative ideas can and do come from anywhere on the globe, and from individuals with a variety of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. That being said, "cultural characteristics may have both functional and dysfunctional consequences for innovation because innovation requires a variety of partly conflicting activities" (Bledow et al., 2011, p. 17). Different cultures approach and view things differently. For example, a culture that is highly hierarchical in nature may have a low propensity toward exploration and creative discovery. A leader cannot approach two different countries or cultures who view hierarchy differently with the same method of leading. What allowed for success in one culture may not have the same results in another. Instead, "If leaders work in different cultures and interact with members with diverse cultural backgrounds, they need a good understanding of the culture and need to be able to tune their leadership approach to cultural characteristics" (Bledow et al., 2011, p. 18). Basically, know your audience. Leaders should have a good grasp of the cultural norms of the people with whom they will be working, so they can be flexible in responding within the scope of the innovation process. This is ambidextrous leadership.

Conformity and Marginalization

In the original development of an organization's culture, all the way back to the values of the founder(s) and in response to external and internal influencers to further shape the culture, there is an assumption that this culture would permeate the entire organization regardless of department, job class, or geographic location. While that is an expectation of organizations in more global and diverse environments, this may not always be the case. A new employee whose personal values are not in line with the organization's culture and values can adapt, acculturate, or they leave the company, but they may also choose to conform simply as a way of self-preservation.

For others, conformity may not be an option they are willing to pursue. As Meyerson (2003) pointed out in her groundbreaking book *Tempered Radicals*, "while the lures toward conformity can be overwhelming in some contexts, for some people this route is unacceptably demoralizing and draining" (pp. 15–16). Marginalization can occur in many ways and toward many different groups for many reasons. She identified,

three primary ways that people experience "difference" from the majority:

- Those who have different social identities from the majority and see those differences as setting them apart and excluding them from the mainstream
- Those who have different social identities and see those differences as merely cultural and not a basis for exclusion
- Those who do not have cultural, but instead philosophical differences, which conflict with the prevailing values, beliefs, and agendas in operating in their organizations. (Meyerson, 2003, p. 20)

The key phrase here is "social identity" which designates how the person identifies himself or herself as a member of a group such as religious affiliation or no affiliation, ethnicity, national origin/nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, introversion, or race. What is most interesting is the perception and experience of each of the identified groups. An individual's

experience is influenced by their perception: two different people who claim the same social

identity may have vastly different experiences based on their perceptions (Meyerson, 2003). The

first group sees their social identity as different, and therefore makes them outsiders or partial

outsiders in their organizations. The second group sees their social identity as a difference but

not one that results in different treatment. The third group—whose differences are more around

beliefs and values—might only feel there is different treatment if they express their divergent

thoughts (Meyerson, 2003). This does not imply that different treatment does not exist; rather, it

looks at an individual's response to difference and if they feel the organization's culture needs to

change, or if there is a need to modify their behavior at all.

> When one sees "difference" strictly as an interesting distinction, one is less likely to see a
> need for change in the broader system . . . one who sees links between identity-based
> differences and patterns of differential treatment will see a need for change and more
> likely act to challenge these patterns. (Meyerson, 2003, p. 21)

Meyerson's (2003) study is specifically about change makers (or leaders) who she called

"tempered radicals"—individuals who are pulled in two opposing directions, toward conformity

and toward rebellion. This creates a level of tension and ambivalence about their organization,

but it also allows them to follow a middle ground, successfully navigating their organizations

while at the same time retaining their own difference. This provides the opportunity to be

creative in how they move forward, preserving their identity and "advancing an agenda from

within" (Meyerson, 2003, p. 11). These tempered radicals find a way to retain or move up in

their organizations while simultaneously finding ways to assist others who are also

marginalized within the organization.

An established majority in an organizational culture may unknowingly be biased against

various groups of people while believing themselves to be objective and fair (Essed, 2012;

Fletcher, 1999; Klein, 2008). And yet, in many organizations there is a preference for

likeness—"constructed or claimed homogeneity while identifying individuals as like-minded, like-looking, like family, like 'us'" (Essed, 2012, p. 127). Klein (2008) noted, "They [executive leadership] perceive talent only if it comes in familiar packaging—that is, looking and acting exactly as they do" (p. 18). Hidden bias can become hidden barriers within an organization in three major areas, according to Klein: commitment of the leadership, mentoring, career development and feedback, and unwelcoming environment. In each case, minority groups can be marginalized and excluded simply because they lack "likeness" to the broader organization.

Additionally, many minority employees must deal with stereotypes while struggling with whether to fight against them or remain silent. "Preferences for homogeneity, whether gendered or racially indexed, are historically part and parcel of the social fabric of modern societies" (Essed & Goldberg, 2012, p. 101). This preference—and the resulting behaviors—can be demoralizing, exhausting, and potentially drive outstanding employees to seek work elsewhere (Essed & Goldberg, 2012; Klein, 2008). An organization's inability to look beyond "checklists and platitudes, add-on programs, and 'Best of' . . . rankings" (Klein, 2008, p. 9) to uncover the hidden biases and barriers, daily slights and snubs, intentional or unintentional omissions, and the impact of micro-insults, costs the company, not only in terms of monetary costs of employee turn-over (which are high), but also in terms of those very awards and recognitions they are trying to achieve. And for the employees themselves the experience can be far-reaching, beyond just a job and into the expectations they had for themselves and their career, the expectations of immediate and extended family, and their own hopes and dreams. Instead of being appreciated and valued, "they know that the wholeness of their lives and all that their experiences can contribute are not welcome" (Klein, 2008, p. 12).

United States Political Climate

The climate in the United States has historically been one where recent immigrants are often regarded suspiciously by those more settled in the United States for generations. The political situation—discussed in greater detail earlier in this chapter—has had its up and downs in relation to the welcoming of immigrants. But in recent years, particularly at the time of the research and writing of this dissertation, the political situation changed. In 2016, Donald J. Trump was elected as president of the United States of America. During his campaign, his platform was "Make America Great Again," with one of his focus areas being that of immigration—both illegal and legal. A campaign promise that seemed to hold a great deal of sway with his voter base was that of a border wall with Mexico. On multiple occasions during his campaign and after winning his bid for President, he said (or tweeted) negative and often untrue statements about immigrants from many countries. His administration's focus on changing the approach to immigration was forceful and, for many, shocking.

On January 27, 2017, Trump signed Executive Order 13769. It became known as the "Muslim Ban" and was labeled so by mainstream media outlets (Girdusky, 2020). This ban, which was issued very quickly after he took office, restricted or banned entry into the United States of immigrants from seven majority-Muslim countries (Jopson, 2017). Local and national news were full of stories of legal immigrants who were in their country of origin for visits and were not allowed re-entry, of families who were set to be reunited after many years and for whom the ban stopped that from happening, and many more situations. The number of refugees accepted to the United States was also restricted and Syrian refugees were banned altogether (Jopson, 2017).

While that initial ban was challenged in court, suspended, and protested, the damage had been done. Many immigrants, even those who immigrated legally and with the proper paperwork to prove it, feared for their families. And with the continued focus on immigration, immigrants, immigrant camps, and discussions of dramatic expansion of the travel bans (Lemire, Mascaro, & Colvin, 2020), the political climate continues to be one of high stress. Although the "Trump effect" on organizational cultures is yet to be researched comprehensively, a negative impact on experiences of immigrant workers is quite likely. This turned out to be the case in the development of my own research as well, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III. This, in turn and in time, impacted my ability to find foreign-born highly-skilled workers willing to participate in this study. The time it took to find the 14 professionals who participated was substantially longer and took more effort than I had anticipated.

Summary of Literature Review

The multidisciplinary review of the literature covered a wide range of topics that are part of and/or influence the overarching subject of the interplay between an organization's culture and the ethnic culture of the employees of that organization. These topics impact the expression of creativity in the workplace and provide solid background on which this study developed. From the research itself, I recognize elements of my own thinking about contextual creativity in the works of Amabile, Kanter, Hennessey, and Angle. Different areas of their research independently resonate with my proposed construct. That creativity is not limited to individuals, but rather, something embodied, supported, or suppressed in organizational culture itself is the base of the concept of contextual creativity (Amabile, 1988, 1996, 1998; Amabile et al., 1996; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). There is an emphasis on the importance of diversity, collaboration, and

teamwork (Kanter, 1988). And there is the impact of an exchange of ideas between individuals with differing points of view on creativity and innovation (Angle, 1989).

Chapter III: Methodology

The research theme here is about the experience of creativity among employees from other countries working within the United States in a U.S.-centric organizational culture. The research question focuses on whether there is a disconnect between the experience of their cultural background and how organizational culture impacts their creativity. In order to investigate this, I explored the lived experiences of individuals within the organizational social system. This required a methodology that emphasized the experience of employees. Given the focus on the lived realities of individuals, which could be multiple in nature, a qualitative method allowing for working with in-depth interviews would be most suitable. The research is also exploratory, aimed at discovering experiences rarely written about which might contribute to relevant theory. In light of this constructivist grounded theory was the most logical methodology for this study. The co-construction of knowledge between the research and participants (Charmaz, 2014) allows for a deep exploration of complex social phenomena.

Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism

The origins of modern GTM can be traced back to George Hebert Mead (1934) and his work in the American philosophical tradition of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. Mead's observations on the human mind, society, and self set the stage for growth and understanding in the philosophical landscape during his time, stretching the boundaries of philosophy. Mead focused on the sociological aspects of interactions; for example, how individuals impact interactions with others. This diverged from the then common outlook based on traits and psychology of individuals. In Mead's view, "action determines the relationship between the individual and the environment" (Strauss & Mead, 1956, pp. xi–xii). His work

became the basis for symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism dealt with meaning making and focused on the relationship between meaning and action (Blumer, 1969).

Herbert Blumer, a student of Mead, advanced the concept of symbolic interactionism. Blumer changed the filter of human experience by asserting that people live in a world surrounded by what he termed "meaningful objects," and that "this world is socially produced in that meanings are fabricated through the process of social interaction" (1969, p. 5). Charmaz (2006) captured this explanation saying, "People construct selves, society, and reality through interaction" (p. 189). This move away from psychology towards a sociology of actual interactions between an individual and their environment, lead to deeper thinking and studies around the process of what is actually happening and the social construction of meaning. Thus Mead's (1934) and Blumer's (1969) work in pragmatism and symbolic interactionism were the roots of what would become GTM.

Early Grounded Theory

In the foreword to their groundbreaking book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated, "We address ourselves to the equally important enterprise of *how the discovery of theory from data—systematically obtained and analyzed in social research—can be furthered*" (p. 1). They wrote that their approach—which they named grounded theory—"fits empirical situations and is understandable to sociologists and laymen alike. Most important, it works—provides us with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications" (p. 1). Considered the pioneers of grounded theory, their early works set the stage for an entirely new, distinctly qualitative, methodology to come to the fore. This was revolutionary at a time when the bias in the sciences and social sciences leaned heavily in favor of quantitative research, not qualitative.

The push toward quantitative methods sprung from a bias in favor of research in the social sciences that would mimic the hard sciences' tradition of seeking for generalizable data. The process of observation, replication of results in subsequent testing, defining of concepts, deduced hypothesis, and defined outcomes was considered the scientific method and formed the assumptions of quantitative research. These assumptions, then, were in support of positivism, at the time the dominant method of inquiry. It assumed the researcher to be a wholly unbiased observer, whose job it was to collect facts while not being part of creating them, to separate facts from values, and to accumulate generalizable knowledge. "Mid-century positivistic conceptions of scientific method and knowledge stressed objectivity, generality, replication of research, and falsification of competing hypotheses and theories" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 6). Mid-century positivists held a very narrow scientific view where the only way of knowing was through quantitative methods, and no other way of knowing would be seen as valid. They viewed qualitative research as "impressionistic, anecdotal, unsystematic, and biased" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 6). This resulted, Charmaz (2014) observed, in "ignoring human problems, and research questions that did not fit positivistic research designs" (pp. 6–7). Qualitative research was seen as lacking in the rigor, procedure, and guidelines of quantitative research. Grounded theory, then, was groundbreaking in that "Glaser and Strauss's book made a cutting-edge statement because it punctured notions of methodological consensus and offered systematic strategies for qualitative research practice" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 7).

Pushing back against the then-overwhelming preference for quantitative research, Glaser and Strauss "proposed that systematic qualitative analysis had its own logic and could generate theory" (as cited in Charmaz, 2014, p. 7). The discovery and development of grounded theory took social research from the validating of theories to actually discovering them. Its roots come

from symbolic interactionism—people interact and act toward situations and things according to the meaning those things hold for them personally. People, for the most part, are aware of how they are viewed by others and can therefore adapt their behavior for specific situations. Blumer invented the term to describe the phenomenon. "Social interactions create meaning and shaping of society via shared meaning predominate over the effect of society on individuals" (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 142). Grounded theory, in conjunction with the theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism, provides the researcher not only the ability to document change as it is happening (or has happened) within a social group, but to understand how this change took place and what was at its core (Morse, 2009). Glaser and Strauss's (1966) research on the dying led to several publications and the use of grounded theory methods. Their book *Awareness of Dying* was a grounded theory study on the procedures in hospitals that deal with the terminally ill. In this, they demonstrated their method, the thinking that led to the method, and the processes around it that would be systematically presented in *Discovering Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Glaser and Strauss saw both quantitative and qualitative data necessary for mutual verification, not quantitative to verify qualitative. And when the two are used as complements, the comparison of the data will generate theory. They stated, "To further these views, we seek in this book to further the systematization of the collection, coding and analysis of qualitative data for the generation of theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 18). They brought the level of rigor to qualitative research that had previously led more traditional quantitative researchers to discount the qualitative methods, thereby giving it a proverbial leg to stand on. Grounded theory "brought to qualitative methods current at the time the rigor and system of analysis that had the potential

to create substantive theory grounded in the experience of everyday life" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 499).

Evolution of Grounded Theory

Each of the founding fathers of grounded theory brought to the theory a strength that helped to shape it. Glaser brought, "dispassionate empiricism, rigorous codified methods, emphasis on emergent discoveries, and its somewhat ambiguous specialized language that echoes quantitative methods" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 9) while Strauss "brought notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and the open-ended study of action" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 9). This joining of backgrounds and strengths produced the legacy of GTM. Despite the monumental work they were able to produce together, something occurred between them and they went their separate ways. Though what exactly happened is not publicly known, individuals who studied with them bwhen Strauss and Glaser were still working together said that they could sense dissimilarities in outlook on grounded theory years before the split took place (Charmaz, 2014).

Glaser remained a grounded theory evangelist, teaching and mentoring students in the method in a way that was consistent with his own rendering of the approach (Charmaz, 2014). Strauss collaborated with Juliet Corbin, writing *The Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Constructing Grounded Theory* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Whereas Glaser remained true to his definition of grounded theory as a method of discovery with concepts and categories emerging from the data, Strauss by himself, and later with his co-author Corbin, moved grounded theory more toward a method of verification (Charmaz, 2014). Strauss and Corbin also favored applying technical procedures instead of highlighting emergent theoretical categories. Glaser felt their procedures required a researcher to force data and analysis into

categories previously identified, rather than allowing for emergence of concepts directly from the data.

Charmaz and Constructivist Grounded Theory

The evolution of grounded theory did not stop with Glaser and Strauss. Other researchers who adopted the method began to give it their own flavor. A number of scholars began to move away from positivism that remained at the base of Glaser and Strauss's earlier works (Charmaz, 2014). One such evolution was toward a constructivist approach. According to Charmaz (2014), a student of Glaser and Strauss, the constructivist approach to grounded theory moved away from seeing the researcher as a neutral observer who approached their studies without their own values. A constructivist grounded theorist takes into account their own values and how these "shape the very facts that they can identify" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 13). Constructivist grounded theory asks the researcher to look closely at their own privilege and preconceptions and what influence—if any—that may have on their analysis. Charmaz embraced constructionism, an approach to learning that had gained prominence as well at the time, to further develop grounded theory into what she coined as *constructionist grounded theory*. She wanted to indicate the understanding and awareness of subjectivity on the part of researchers, and that the researcher him/herself is involved in the construction and interpretation of the data. This aligns with the outlook of social constructivists who "stress social contexts, interaction, sharing viewpoints, and interpretive understandings. These constructivists view knowing and learning as embedded in social life" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14).

Constructivist grounded theorists "try to locate participants' meanings and actions in larger social structures and discourses of which they may be unaware" (Morse et al., 2009, p. 131). In this way, the researcher can identify the connections between the macro and micro

levels of analysis with a goal of linking the subjective and the social. Grounded theory is not a static formula to be followed exactly by all who use this method. Rather than being standardized and prescriptive, grounded theory concerns how the researcher thinks about the data. Adaptation of grounded theory is almost obligatory for each and every study conducted under its name, depending on the research question, participants, situation, and the researcher him or herself (Morse, 2009). This means that grounded theory remains dynamic and evolving, as each individual use potentially brings about a slightly or vastly different application of the method. Creswell (2014) stated, "Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of the situation" (p. 4).

Lived experience and the factors that contribute to it are complex at best. No two people will have the same lived experience as their own filters color their understanding and view of each and every situation. Indeed, the same person can have a different lived experience than they have had in the past even under similar circumstances as human constructions can be multiple and tend to be fluid in nature. According to Charmaz (2014), "this type of theory assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as inextricably linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual" (p. 213). In the constructivist view, the researcher approaches the topic in a way that will foster an understanding of the complex social constructions in play.

GTM seeks to uncover what is going on in the area of research focus. This thought process allows the researcher to enter into discovery in an effort to understand the social processes through the lived experience of people (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Bryant, 2007; Creswell, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). Grounded theory studies

are done with those closest to the phenomena being researched. The same could also be said for other methods of study that engage with that same demographic of people, such as narrative analysis and phenomenology. In order for a study to be truly considered grounded theory, it must meet certain basic criteria according to Charmaz (2014):

> Conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process; analyze actions and processes rather than themes and structure; use comparative methods; draw on data (e.g., narratives and descriptions) in service of developing new conceptual categories; develop inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis; emphasize theory construction rather than description or application of current theories, engage in theoretical sampling; search for variation in the studied categories or process; pursue developing a category rather than covering a specific empirical topic. (p. 15)

Methodological Fit

There were many elements to consider in choosing GTM as the method of research. I wanted to make sure the research method chosen fit my topic, that non-academics and all individuals in my field would understand the findings and conclusions, and that the theory developed be applicable beyond just the purposeful sample of the study. For these reasons it was important to be open minded and listen to a range of stories of individuals who have found ways of working within an organizational culture in order to produce creatively in situations where the organizational culture does not match or fit with their own ethnic cultures, or those who struggled and were unable to hold on to that creativity within them. Probing without steering the conversation would bring to the surface their ways of thinking, the processes of how they navigated those experiences, what their choices were, and what influenced their output and their decisions. But it didn't end there for this study.

Morse (2009) stated, "Every application, every time grounded theory is used, it requires adaptation on particular ways" (p. 14). Constructivist grounded theory is an iterative process, requiring the researcher to engage with the data and analyze it along the way (Charmaz, 2014). It

holds the potential to "uncover the elusive qualities of the workplace, take the researcher beyond hegemonic understandings of organizations, hold as central the participants and their stories, portray complex interactions, include an intersectional stance, and make visible the role of silence" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 497). All of this made grounded theory methodology the right fit for my focus area.

Data gathering in GTM can include such methods as field notes, observations, interviews, and the review of documentation such as emails, memos, public policy documents, public relations materials, and other formal or informal documentation from within the social situation of interest (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). My primary focus within GTM was the method of intensive interviews to delve deeply into the stories of my participants and their experience with creativity in a work environment whose cultural base is different from their own. Interviews are the primary method of choice in constructivist GTM (Charmaz & Keller, 2016) which allows them to emphasize the "perspective and experiences of those inside the situation being studied" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, pp. 26–27).

Intensive interviews, according to Charmaz (2014), are meant to allow for the flow of thoughts from the participant, resulting in "open ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, paced yet unrestricted" (p. 85) conversations that allow the researcher to become a voyeur into the lived experience of the participant. Though the interviewer is still the one guiding, they do not direct or interrupt to ask their own questions, rather allowing the exploration to evolve and unfold according to the discourse of the participant him or herself. According to Charmaz (2014),

> Intensive interviewing focuses the topic while providing the interactive space and time to enable the research participant's views and insights to emerge. Any interviewer assumes more direct control over the construction of data than most other qualitative methods allow . . . Grounded theory methods enable researchers to take successively more analytical control over their data collection and emerging theoretical ideas. (p. 85)

In the initial sampling, there were two main objectives: First, the purposeful sample "seeks to engage individuals and discourse relevant to the purpose of the study . . . not to establish a randomly selected sample from the population, but to deliberately invite individuals in roles who have experience in the phenomenon" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 511). Second, when determining the criteria for participants of this study, it was essential to identify participants who were on the ground floor of the phenomenon I studied. Selecting participants was the beginning of a more complex research process.

Process of Grounded Theory

Figure 3.1 identifies each phase of the grounded theory research process. The process takes the researcher from their own perspective regarding the phenomenon, perhaps mixed with passion around the topic and an inherent interest (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). As outlined by Holloway and Schwartz (2018), the process of GTM mimics the natural human practice when faced with a phenomenon that cannot be explained by previous understandings in similar contexts. GTM moves beyond mental models that are innately turned to explain a phenomenon that is truly not understood or does not naturally fit into familiar paradigms, to uncovering and discovering what is really going on.
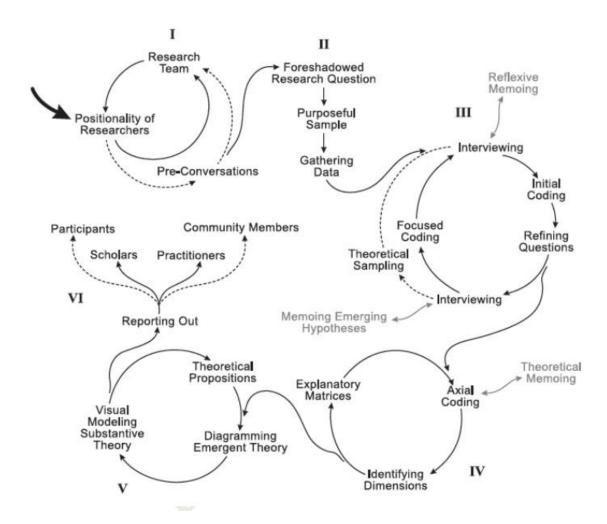
Figure 3.1. Grounded theory research process. "The dotted lines represent those instances when the researcher determines the relevance of including these activities in the research process. The greyed text represents the researcher's reflective journaling of the on-going analytic process. The Roman numerals reference the phases of action in the research process" (Holloway & Schwartz, p. 507). From "Drawing from the Margins: Grounded Theory Research Design and EDI Studies" by E. Holloway and H. Schwartz, in Booysen et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods on Diversity Management*, *Equality*, *and Inclusion at Work*, p. 507. Copyright 2018, Lize A. E. Booysen, Regine Bendl, & Judith K. Pringle. Used with permission.

My own process followed much the same path as in Figure 3.1, though my timeline was not as clearly defined. For me, pre-conversations have been occurring over the last 30 years, informally and untargeted, around this phenomenon in particular and around culture/ethnicity in a more general sense. Most of my adult life was lived in a highly multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, diverse community and allowed me to be immersed in not only the cultures of others, but their

struggles and successes as well. More targeted pre-conversations were ongoing over the last two years as my research questions began to take shape and form, and I was able to express the concepts of the experiences of recent immigrants or the experience of creativity in the workplace using these words with folks regardless of the eventual demographic makeup of my purposeful sample. According to the research, not only are pre-conversations important in helping researchers who potentially stand outside of the phenomenon they will be researching get a clearer picture of what is happening with those who are experiencing the phenomenon, but pre-conversations "also serve to move the focus of research outside the dominant theoretical discourse that privileges the dominant voice" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 509). While I have been immersed in the phenomenon I studied, the pre-conversations allowed me to "think out loud" as I defined and refined my research question.

Although my research question was already identified, GTM uses the term "foreshadowing the research question," laying the groundwork for the possibility of a shift in the study's focus as the researcher begins to explore the experience of the participants. Keeping that open mind, allowing for the interview responses to participants' experiences to guide the study and not depending on the predefined research question to guide the interviews, is an essential element of GTM (Charmaz, 2014) and was the process I used for this study.

Purposeful Sample: Participant Description

For this study to be relevant and impactful to the research question, criteria were determined for selecting participants. Participants' requirements were as follows:

- Born outside the United States;
- Spent at least part of their formative years living outside the United States;
- Currently lives and works in the United States;

- Works for a U.S.-centric organization;

- Professional roles in a corporate, for-profit setting;

- Has been in the United States more than one year;

- English is not their first or home language (i.e., home language is/was not English, even if work language is/was); and

- English skills are currently at professional level, or fluent.

These demographic criteria were aimed at identifying individuals who were within the targeted demographic and who may have experience with the phenomenon of navigating a foreign system. They also select for those who may have experienced a loss of creative output/energy because of a mismatch between their home culture and their organization's culture or, conversely, who may have experienced a boost in creativity from this culture difference.

To identify potential participants, I spoke with others in my industry who agreed to assist in my search. I posted on LinkedIn and then informed my contacts that the post was there, and some shared the post in order to get the most visibility.

Some of my contacts are high-level, high-profile individuals from well-known organizations, so the expectation was that if they kept their word to assist in the search, this process would result in the required number of participants for this study in a relatively short period of time. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Some of my contacts who had previously agreed to assist in my search did not respond to my follow-up request and, therefore, I could not count on them as hoped. As well, some of the people I had spoken with over the course of the last year who had expressed interest in being a part of this study decided against it when the time came. Some of them did not qualify based on the requirements of length of time in the United States or other reasons. Additionally, I sent out an email to my Antioch PhD in

Leadership and Change connections to increase the chances of locating participants, but that also had limited success. Though my original expectation was to have around 30 interviews conducted for this study, given the difficulties in finding willing participants, the study capped out at 14 participants. One of the early participants made a conscious and energetic effort to recruit others with whom he had worked or had friendships, and that resulted in the high number of engineers in this study. He was able to recruit four engineers to participate and had reached out to many more who decided against it.

It is worth underlining that it was indeed extremely difficult to find participants for my study even though I personally have connections with individuals who themselves personally have connections with a large number of people who fall into this demographic. At one point, one of my contacts sent an email with a distribution list of more than 100 people of whom a good proportion seemed likely to qualify for my study—or know someone who would—but no one responded. My contact suggested I might want to start attending religious meetings to get my face and name out there since people appeared to be reluctant to speak with someone they do not know. I did not, because I did not want to mix religion and my research studies, nor did I want to give the impression I was using religion or an interest in a particular religion as a way to get participants.

I personally reached out to several people who would have qualified for this study and was turned down by most. The main reason for this was an unwillingness for immigrants to put themselves in a position where they felt vulnerable, may be identified, or could have any potential for bringing their family unwanted attention. In other words—fear. This, in turn and in time, impacted my ability to find foreign-born professionals who were willing to become a participant in this study. The time it took to find the 14 professionals who participated was

substantially longer than anticipated. I believe that in this current political climate, even people who live and work here with the appropriate paperwork are afraid of speaking with someone they do not know. Despite my assurances, very few of those I contacted were willing to participate. Of those I reached out to personally, only five participated. Other participants were recommended to me from the outreach done on LinkedIn or through my school and professional contacts. Although fewer in numbers than my original expectations, the interviews with the 14 participants turned out to be very meaningful for the project.

Data Collection: Interviewing

Data gathering in GTM, typically through interviews, is a process of co-construction. According to Charmaz (2006), the interviewee does most of the talking; the interviewer's role is more of facilitator, to keep the conversation going, to probe more deeply, and to encourage a deeper dive into the participant's personal experience. Interviews lasted between 35 and 90 minutes. After initial introductions, I gave a brief preamble about the purpose of the study. During this preamble, I mentioned the word "creativity" and provided some alternative language or examples of creativity in the workplace. I framed the conversation by saying something like, "We all define or think of creativity in different ways given our experiences. It could be those projects when you," and then I offered some examples such as, "when you are given vague project parameters and need to come up with a solid plan," or "when a client explains their vision of the deliverable and you fill in the blanks to make it a reality," or something along those lines.

I began the interviews saying, "Today I'd like to discuss your experience of creativity (or of being creative) within your organization" (the current and/or former U.S.-centric workplace organization of the participant). This open-ended approach to beginning the interview process is in keeping with Charmaz's (2014) recommendation for interviewing in GTM. Charmaz (2014)

stated interview questions should be open-ended in nature, which in turn would elicit detailed responses. From these responses, Charmaz saw opportunity for follow up that could lead to rich information and data that may not otherwise be uncovered. Given the open-ended and probative nature of GTM interviews, it is not possible to guess at the type of or number of different responses or themes to this overarching question.

All interviews were professionally transcribed from audio recordings made with the prior permission of each participant.[1]

Theoretical Sampling

According to Charmaz (2006), *theoretical sampling* "involves starting with data, constructing tentative ideas about the data, and then examining these ideas through further empirical inquiry" (p. 102). It is the process of collecting data with the eventual outcome of constructing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theory development is achieved not only by collecting the data—which, for this study, was interviews—but also through the process of coding and analysis. Through that analysis, the researcher can determine which groups they may have to include in data collection next, and for what purpose. This only comes to light, however, once the initial data collection (interviews) are conducted, completed, and the data coded and analyzed. The analysis did not change the group(s) that were included in this study beyond the original description.

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[1] In the excerpts of transcriptions in Chapter IV, all participant quotations are in blocked format, not only passages of 40 words or more This divergence from the usual rules of APA formatting was done so that the commentary of participants all looks the same. Further, I have used the symbol of two dots (..) to indicate brief pauses in the speech of participants, following the widely used transcription formatting outlined by Gumperz and Berenz (1993). This avoids possible confusion with ellipses, which, in APA style, signify words that the author purposely omitted.

Data Analysis

In GTM, data collection and data analysis are not necessarily sequential in nature (Charmaz, 2014). Data are used to construct theory, and not to solely interpret the data. Though in GTM research happens in lock-step with data gathering, there needs to be restraint on the part of the researcher in jumping to theory too early in that analysis process. The focus instead should be on the social processes at play, uncovered through the stories and narratives of the participants. There are different GTM strategies I used to move through the data gathered, including memoing, different stages of coding, and analysis of the data (see Figure 3.1).

Memoing. One method used to capture the researcher's presence and reactions to the data and its interpretations is that of memoing (Charmaz, 2014). Memoing can occur at many points within the project, starting from the very beginning stages such as reflexive memoing, which "positions researchers to document their reflexive understanding of their reactions and presence in the field, particularly in regard to interviewing and observational experiences" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 513). Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified memoing as an essential activity for the researcher to identify their own thoughts about the data in a space and place separate from the data itself. Continual memoing allows researchers to record their understanding of the data and hunches about potential theory along the duration of the project, keeping the researcher engaged and involved as data continues to unfold throughout the lifecycle of the project (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). In the home stretch of a research project, theoretical memoing allows the researcher to closely align a theoretical framework with the lived experience as described by the interview participants.

Coding. According to Charmaz (2014), coding progresses the researcher through the data, allowing them to enter into the data in an analytical frame of mind, while at the same time

being open to what the data is actually suggesting rather than being focused on the accuracy of the data itself, or in proving correct theories found in research. There are several different levels of coding and, unfortunately, many different labels for these different levels, sometimes many labels for the same coding experience (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). The process of coding at the multiple levels takes the researcher through the data from a conceptual level through to a theoretical output.

The stages of coding for this research study were initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical matrix. In the stage of initial coding, the researcher is coding line-by-line through the data. Additionally, a team was created to perform the function of a coding team. Initially, two other Antioch doctoral students were included as part of the team, but one left the team because of her own dissertation deadlines. For my research study and the medium of interviews, the *in vivo* coding was done on the transcript data following the interviews. The interviews were recorded and sent to a transcriptionist, and then uploaded into the Dedoose tool for coding. Initial coding was the first step in the coding process. During initial coding, it is important for the researcher to mentally disassociate from what is found in current research and the data in front of them from the participants (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). This allows the researcher freedom to enter into the mindset and experiences of the participants without being shackled by "what's already known" and published, removing the concern of trying to force fit the data into the molds of pre-existing theory and/or ignoring or overlooking those data points which may indicate something contrary to currently accepted theories.

Once the initial coding was completed, the research project moved into the focused coding stage. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the initial coding phase results in a quick emergence of categories, with the next steps building to the overarching concepts representing

the lived experience of the participants. In this stage of coding, the researcher will group codes identified in initial coding into conceptual "buckets" and naming them categorically (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). Constant comparative analysis in GTM allows the researcher to move back and forth between new data that is being collected and data that is already analyzed and coded (Charmaz, 2014). It is an iterative process that helps to prevent the researcher from determining a theoretical frame too early in the process and excluding pertinent data that may have come later in the data collection process (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). The use of constant comparative analysis, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), provides a path to generation of theory that is "integrated, consistent, plausible, and close to the data" (p. 103).

Once the researcher and coding team have reached this point, they begin to look for relationships among the larger concepts they have already identified through the process of axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding specifies the dimensions of a category, and a way of re-assembling the data that was analyzed into smaller chunks during the first two rounds of coding. According to Charmaz (2014), this phase is to relate categories with subcategories to identify meaning and is a means by which the researcher can specify the dimensions of a category. Though the first three stages of coding seem linear in nature, they may or may not be as the researcher uses constant comparative analysis throughout the research project. I used Dedoose to assist in the coding and analysis of the interview data.

The explanatory (or theoretical) matrix, which is part of the overall dimensional analysis, allows the researcher to approach their data from multiple angles. Dimensions are part of the larger context of action and interaction as experienced by the participants in their lived experiences, and how these may impact the world or context around them (Schatzman, 1991). The explanatory matrix provides the framework or structure for the research to hang this content

upon, allowing them the ability to step back and "examine the relationship among the dimensions developed through the matrices into a grounded heuristic model that reflects meaning that the participants make of their lived experience" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 519). From this analysis a central or base dimension emerges, with primary or secondary dimensions being related to the central dimension.

Building theory. "If theory building is indeed the goal, then findings should be presented as a set of interrelated concepts, not just a listing of themes" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 104). Theory creation or building occurs from the dimensional framework and conceptual structure identified in the explanatory matrix (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). After the analysis of "attributes, interconnections, contexts, processes, and implications" (Schatzman, 1991, p. 309), which came from the data, a theory should emerge which includes all of the considerations and impacts of the phenomenon of the lived experience (Schatzman, 1991). Here, again, the researcher must be careful not to view the data in front of them only through their own theoretical lens, or a lens colored by existing and/or popular published theories, but rather to mentally push away from the dominant paradigms and instead truly look at the data to see what else may exist there (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). In this research study, my aim was to mentally disassociate from my knowledge of existing paradigms and expectations as well as from my own potential theories and, instead, engage with the data as it was gathered, analyzed, and reconstructed into dimensions and theory.

Ethical Concerns

At first thought, I believed any ethical concerns were mild to non-existent. Participants were being asked to share their own experiences of working and navigating organizational cultures which differ from their own home cultures. After some consideration, while I still

believed ethical concerns were minor, there was a concern of a participant walking away from the interview feeling down (or perhaps more so than they already did) about their particular work situation that they discussed with me during the interview. Since I did not ask them pointed questions or ask them to delve deeply into areas that made them uncomfortable, they were able to stop a line of discussion if/when they felt any sort of discomfort. No participant indicated the need to do this.

I wanted them to lead this conversation, to provide me with information and experience and feelings and emotions, and therefore the stop/go switch rested firmly in their hands. That being said, there was the potential, however slight, they might feel comfortable sharing in the moment but then regret it upon later reflection. For this reason, participants were sent their transcripts for review after transcription and with any identifying information scrubbed. They were allowed to request their responses in total to be removed, to strike out anything they wished to individually, or to add and/or clarify anything in the transcript as they felt necessary. Four of the 14 participants chose to give clarifying remarks, one asked me not to include a few of the stories she shared with me at the time of the sharing, and one added some content after reviewing the transcripts. Participants were anonymous in my research results, and all identifying data, such as their names, company names, or any data that might make it easy to identify the company and/or participant, were removed and/or given a pseudonym.

Participants are only identified by a letter/number combination (i.e., A1, A2, etc.) and their words were used as the sole source of content for the data analysis. In grounded theory, the concepts that emerge are directly tied to the content shared by participants, and their unique use of language is preserved and utilized in the data analysis process

Chapter IV: The Findings

Introducing the Participants

For the study, I interviewed 14 foreign-born professional workers for 35 to 90 minutes over the phone. All participants lived in the United States and work for a U.S.-centric organization. The length of time they have lived in the United States ranged from just under three years to nearly 40 years. They were from 11 different countries, had 12 different native languages, and worked in 11 different industries. Of the 14 participants, 50% were male and 50% were female. Seven of the 14 were engineers and three were consultants with mid- to large-consulting firms. Figure 4.1 shows the partcipants' native languages.
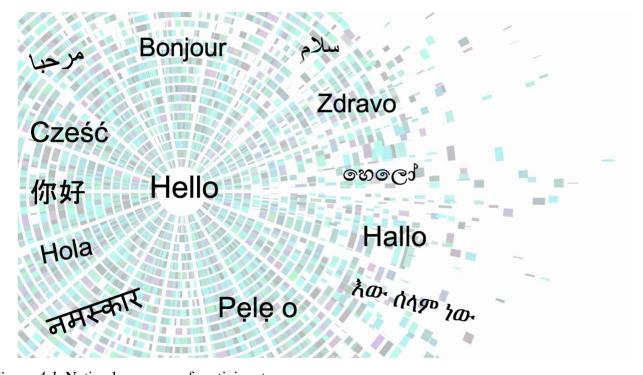
Figure 4.1. Native languages of participants.

Two were from Syria, two from India, and two from Nigeria; other countries include Bosnia, Poland, Egypt, France, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Mexico, and Australia (though this participant was originally from Germany and migrated to Australia). Five of the participants were between the ages of 26 and 35, four were between 56 and 65, three between 46 and 55, and

two between 36 and 45. Five participants had been in the United States for less than three years while three had been in the United States between 26 and 30 years. Figure 4.2 summarizes these demographics of participants.
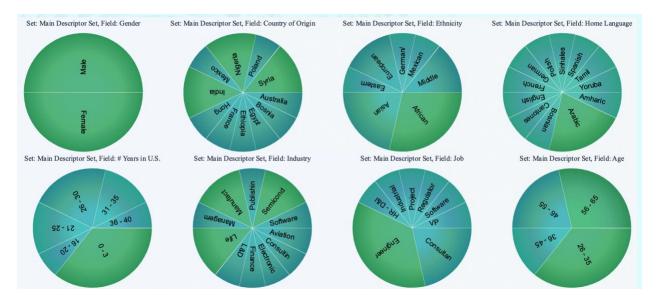
Figure 4.2. Participant demographics.

Creativity—What Do You Mean?

Two of the participants began the interview by saying they did not originally think they were creative or in a role that requires creativity when they first considered participating, but after reflection realized they did use creativity in their workplace. Nine participants expressed at the beginning of the interview that they did not see themselves as creative, but their view began to change during the course of the conversation. A narrow interpretation of what creativity, particularly workplace creativity, was the main reason for originally considering themselves as not creative.

> I don't consider myself a creative person, even though on the surface of it I have a lot of accomplishments. (A4)

Later, however, Participant A4 did see the creativity in his work:

> It's not just the subject of creating an idea out of nowhere or in a virtual space; the follow-on process is creative. If we look at it that way, yes. I consider myself creative in that sense. (A4)

At times, participants indicated their industry or field of work itself isn't one that can be considered creative. While this was particularly true with the engineers, there were others who also held this view initially. Participant A7, who works in compliance within the financial services industry, said,

> I work in financial services, I'm not sure we are all that creative . . [I have] not one creative bone in my body, but maybe that's the cultural dynamic. (A7)

 Many participants with this view thought of creativity more along the lines of either artistic ability or the accomplishment of major life-changing inventions. During the course of the discussion, some realized that smaller, everyday problem-solving is also an expression of creativity. Some participants came to the conversation having made their own realization about their creativity within their roles or industries. Participant A1 said,

> As far as creativity, when I first read your call for participants, I thought I have the least creative job because it is extremely regimented. But then I thought—"Wait a minute, no. We are very creative." (A1)

The view of culture as having an impact on their expression of creativity was also an area of uncertainty for some. As participant A4 described it, in his opinion culture doesn't make a big impact on the work of an engineer stating, "We do what we do no matter where we are." Participant A10, also an engineer, likewise felt that cultural differences—at least from an ethnic culture perspective—do not play much of a role or influence on the work lives of engineers:

> See, we're engineers, so we work with machines. People don't matter that much. I'm working in business, [so] then I would expect that definitely the culture would make a huge change because what people are interested in, how you would sell them something, what are the important things to people .. that would make a big difference. But in terms of my work, we speak a universal language: it's computers, so. (A10)

Participant A5, another engineer, summed up not seeing themself as creative, particularly in roles such as engineering, saying, "We engineers all work on basic math. One plus one equals two. End of story." Some engineers did see themselves as creative, however, and most did not agree that culture does not make an impact. There was enough initial resistance to the idea that it is worth pointing out.

Dimensional Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of foreign-born professional employees living and working in the United States for U.S.-centric organizations and the impact, if any, they feel the interplay between their own ethnic culture and the organization's culture has on their expression of creativity in the workplace. In this chapter, the findings are organized into dimensions, and I present the condition, process, and impact or consequences of each dimension (Benson & Holloway, 2005; Bowers & Schatzman, 2009; Kools, McCarthy, Durham, & Robrecht, 1996).

Five dimensions were identified with one as the pivotal or core dimension from which the others can be accessed. There are three contexts in which these dimensions occur—with organization, with self, and with other—as shown in Table 4.1. The voices of the participants in their stories bring the dimensions to life and shine a light on the significance of each person's experience. The words chosen for the primary dimensions are as close as possible to the wording the participants used, as to reflect their thinking as closely as possible.

Table 4.1

Social Contexts and Primary Dimensions

	CONTEXT		
	WITH ORGANIZATION	WITH SELF	WITH OTHER
DIMENSION	Stepping out of Comfort Zone	Habituating	Relating
	Being a Conduit	Relating	Being a Conduit
		Stepping out of Comfort Zone	

Four primary dimensions and one core dimension emerged from the data. Each dimension will be discussed independently, and then the core dimension will be named and discussed both independently and, then, in terms of interactions with the primary dimensions. The four primary dimensions are Habituating, Relating, Stepping out of Comfort Zone, and Being a Conduit.

Primary dimension: Habituating. For this study, *habituating* refers to the personal process of assessing a given recurring or non-recurring situation for cultural differences and making appropriate changes to cultural response; it is stored in memory banks for future recall and use. This occurs within the context of an individual's new cultural environment.

> That's generally where I see my ability to think differently and I think it's because when you come from a different culture you have to read people very quickly, right .. I'm always adapting. (A7)

> I don't know that it's a habituation around how you have learned and grown through an early part of your life and having to make that switch in a different kind of an environment in the West where all of a sudden, you're in a group setting. And it's like "go brainstorm and figure this out" is not sort of a natural .. It's not a natural habit. Right? And so, my sense has been that Asian cultures have kind of had .. it's much more of an adjustment there. (A13)

> If this is something acceptable in this culture then I tend to be able to recognize it and try to adapt my workstyle accordingly. (A2)

Other participants are currently in the process of habituating and finding some difficulties in doing so. For example:

> It takes a while to completely adjust. I'm not saying I have difficulties working here. Just because of all the difference, you know; different structure, different way of communicating. I'm good, you know. But as I say, due to the cultural difference I find it difficult to do things. (A3)

One of the participants is a leader who manages people from many different countries and cultures. Part of the creativity in leadership, she said, is the ability to adapt.

> I think even in just a management position you have to adapt your style to meet the needs of the people who are actually producing the work. (A1)

This comes more naturally to her, she believes, because she herself is an immigrant.

> The other managers [I work with] are from the United States. They are United States born and bred. Not to say they haven't traveled abroad or experienced more global positions. But I have a unique background because I came as a refugee and I was a child when I came, and the resiliency you face as a child .. and I think that shaped a lot of the experiences I then chose to have as an adult. (A1)

Conditions and sub-categories for the primary dimension of Habituating are in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Explanatory Matrix—Habituating

Condition	**Dimension**/ Sub-Dimension(s)	Impact/Consequence
	Habituating	
Faced with new circumstances	Code-switching	Over time, this can become the new cultural response
		Sustained switch—depletion of energy
Faced with different cultural environment/responses	**Self-actualizing** • Fitting In • Preserving Self • Integrating	Integration of new cultural responses with self

Note. Spectrum for "fitting in" and "preserving self"—too far in either direction can have negative consequences. See also discussion in text.

Cross-cultural code-switching. Short-term conscious efforts to display or engage in cultural responses appropriate to the new situation is called "cross-cultural code-switching" (Molinsky, 2007, p. 622). These cultural responses occur when an individual is faced with specific situations where there are new circumstances requiring responses different from their normal cultural response. One potential draw-back of cross-cultural code switching identified by Molinsky (2007) is that long-term, sustained code-switching can possibly cause exhaustion, even if the event requiring code-switching was a success.

Faced with new circumstances. The primary condition of cross-cultural code-switching is being faced with new circumstances for a specific situation. Participants spoke of trying to adjust to the changes in their environment.

> There are lots of things that are new to me in the culture .. For example, keep your voice low, speak only to your audience, and I'm still trying to adjust to that. (A3)

New cultural response. A consequence of cross-cultural code-switching is that the intentional, conscious act of choosing a new cultural response over the "normal" one can become the new, automatic cultural response. Over time, the conscious and purposeful cultural responses to new cultural circumstances changes from being one that is short-term and accomplished with mental effort to potentially becoming a new habit. This effortful-to-effortless transition occurs as the new cultural responses are repeatedly practiced and habituated. As one participant explained,

> I would say it certainly has required me to become more conscious and deliberate about making sure that I say something and not always be asked. I think over time that's changed. I think personally for me—I don't have to think about it now—I think just kind of having been in the corporate environment now for the last 20 years, I would say. (A13)

Self-actualizing. The concept of self-actualization comes from psychology and can be defined as the achievement of full potential on the part of an individual through their growth toward the fulfillment of the highest needs (Maslow, 1970), when a person strives and reaches their greatest potential. When used in the context of this study, it represents an individual's

internal motivation to respond to the cultural changes around them and their growth through the process of habituating and/or response to the behavioral requirements of their new host culture. Cultural responses fell generally into three different categories of response—*fitting in*, *preserving self*, or *integrating*. Being too far in either pole—fitting in or preserving self—can possibly produce negative consequences for the individual.

   Faced with different cultural environment. This condition is when immigrants are faced with a cultural environment or expected cultural response that is different from an individual's home culture. Participants discussed how they approached the situation and what types of reactions different situations evoked. Figure 4.3 depicts the choice faced for "integrating" in these situations.

FITTING IN	⟷	PRESERVING SELF
	INTEGRATING	

Figure 4.3. Choice of responses in U.S. situations for immigrant professionals.

   Not all participants reacted to the same types of situations in the same way; a specific kind of situation may make one participant respond with "fitting in" while another would instead respond with "preserving self." And because a participant's response in a prior event was "fitting in" did not mean he or she would always respond to every new situation by "fitting in." Rather, participants described the need to evaluate a situation to determine the appropriate response. Additionally, these changed over time and exposure to the situation. The more often a situation was encountered and successfully navigated, the more the likelihood the natural cultural response would change to one reflective of the new country; meaning, what started as a conscious attempt at fitting in would become a part of the person's natural, and therefore automatic, cultural responses—or new cultural default (Soucie, 2015a).

Fitting in. The act of fitting in meant initially and consciously choosing a new cultural response even if it wasn't natural or the norm for their own cultural experience. This was neither good nor bad in and of itself, but one way of dealing with the differences in culture. Some participants spoke of the importance of fitting in to their new circumstances and cultural norms:

> I mean for me I'm the same person, but I do things differently when the setting and the company's value is different. (A2)

> I really want to fit into my world. If I fit into my world then I'm probably going to be more successful. (A7)

Preserving self. On the opposite side of fitting in is the act of preserving self. Some participants spoke of how, in certain circumstances, they will hold on to their identity or self even if their natural culture response—or cultural default—is different from the norms experienced in their current situation. Some described this as important to their identity and to their expression of creativity. And for some, that tension between fitting in to the new culture norm and moving forward with their own cultural norm lies beneath the surface, a personal struggle in the journey toward habituating.

> I know my personality is different and then my culture is different, but I can't separate both, like they are both a very big part of who I am. (A11)

> I've entertained customers for lunches in Ramadan when I'm fasting. And no, I don't tell them that until we're sitting in the restaurant at the table and I say, "I am not eating for this reason." (A5)

> I think it's just stupid to listen to a rule you don't understand. And I say, "You know what I'm going to do it differently and by the way, I'm not going to hide it. I'm telling you, it's a stupid rule, and I don't think I'm going to follow it. And let's see what happens, you know." I'll do it at my desk. I'm not going to send. But I'm not going to listen, I'm going to follow through and let's see what happens if I don't. (A4)

> It's not like you have to become another person here. Absolutely not. (A4)

In some cases, the influence of their cultural experiences from their own cultures allowed them to be more appreciative of their new cultural experience, without necessarily losing any of

their cultural identity. When Participant A5 approached one of the other participants about

participating in my study, they had an exchange about it:

> But when I walked in the office and I mentioned you to him, he kind of smiled and he said, "Well I like it here." And I said, "I like it too." Because we came from the same oppressive country system or whatever it is, and we laughed. I said, "Yeah, we like it here because of whatever culture we actually came *from*." (A5)

> ***Integrating***. Reaching the fullest extent of this actualization would result in adding new

cultural responses to an individual's repertoire of possible responses. Rather than deleting prior

cultural norms, the act of integrating provides a rich repository from which an individual can

draw when faced with different situations. Over time, these responses come less in the form of

conscious effort and more routine unconscious responses. Evaluation of the situation and

selection of appropriate response begins to occur more behind the scenes subconsciously.

Integrating was the most used approach by participants. Participant A4 spoke about following

rules versus not following rules in his workplace. His pushback on following rules—quoted in

the above discussion in the section on "preserving self"—he attributes to his native country; but

he also has the self-actualizing knowledge that pushing back too hard against rules may at a

certain point become a detriment.

> I think there is a lot of human factor missing. If you don't justify [your requests], why should we listen? So that's where coming from a different background helps. That's my creativity, if you like, doing things by the book versus not doing things by the book and relying on personal factors. (A4)

> I'm thinking: maybe that's the way it should be. Maybe there should be some freedom, even in the architecture of a building, not necessarily "If it's not the right angle it's the wrong angle." Maybe there should be some mix, even at the expense of there being disorder. More chaotic. Because if everything is lined up, there is there is no creativity in it. (A4)

> Other participants spoke of how to approach the integrating process, meaning, how they

can follow the cultural expectations of fitting in, and still have their self or ideas represented.

You do it by small .. you don't rock the boat too much. So, whatever is done, it is only changing slightly. (A7)

Primary dimension: Relating. The primary dimension of Relating has an additional nuance of the context of interaction; the conditions of the relational experiences can occur within the context of "with similar"—which in this case means with other immigrants or those who have experienced living in their new cultural environment, or with "other"—in this case meaning those who are born and raised in the United States. The need to relate, connect, and have a sense of belonging was strongly indicated during the interviews. And in order for work to be done, interactions are required. As A2 stated, "You can't just create a new product or come up with a new solution without involving other team members." Some participants discussed the difference in relational connections in the context of work and the impact that has on creativity between their home countries and living and working in the United States. Other participants felt being able to (or, conversely, not being able to) connect with individuals who have themselves experienced relocating their lives to the United States—regardless of their country of origin —played a major impact on their happiness in the workplace, which in turn impacted their ability to be productive and creative. And yet others felt that a sense of alienation, or the inability to make that connection with another, was a barrier to their happiness and success. Relationships are important for building the trust necessary to have a solid way of working and, in turn, the expression of creativity. When people are seen as human beings and not just an entity, that gets work done. And when they are not viewed with the relational lens, it can end in failure or impede success.

> I'm always fascinated when someone will take the time to say—let's check with the people actually doing the work to see if this is possible, to see what their thoughts are. I always feel like the relational piece is not the guiding light source. It's always the—what can we do to get these people to produce even more. (A1)

That's exactly the way I describe it [management styles in America] for the management. And that means he [the manager] will be in control, knows everything…But I don't know my neighbor in the cube next to me what he is doing and if he asks me a question [how I should answer him]. (A9)

More than one participant spoke about how creativity is relational, and that need to connect with others—both those who are "like" you and those who are not—is essential in being creative.

[As a manager I think] who can I put in charge of this, who can I empower? Who can I sort of hand off the creativity to? So, I think a lot of creativity is a shared responsibility of, you know, here's what the process might look like, but you have the expertise, you finish it…So, there is a lot of shared space for creativity. (A1)

Table 4.3 shows the conditions, dimension, and sub-dimensions for Relating.

Table 4.3

Explanatory Matrix—Relating

Context	Condition	**Dimension**/ Sub-Dimension	Impact/Consequence
		Relating	
With similar	Relational trust with "those like me" or Feeling of kinship through sameness of situation	Sharing experiences	Ability to better adjust to new circumstances
With "other"	Need for belonging	Connecting with "other"	Safe space to share ideas

Sharing experiences. Several participants described the need for or found they were connecting more naturally with others who were also immigrants to the United States. They reported that not having a connection results in less happiness in the workplace. This impacts job performance and creative output. Working with others who share your experience—in this case being an immigrant—helps them feel comfortable and share creatively. It relieves the feelings of isolation.

Feeling of kinship through sameness of situation. The shared experience and the ability to connect with someone who "knows what it's like" makes a difference, even if the other person isn't from the individual's home country. This relational trust between two people who have the immigrant experience provides a feeling of kinship and the knowledge that they are not the only ones who feel this way.

> I think it helped me [to work with other immigrants]. Like people that have the same kind of foreigner, being from different place. Yeah. I think it helped me because I'm very .. a very people connection kind of person. I like finding people that I have something in common with. (A11)

> Here at first I felt myself a lot more comfortable with the English people in the organization just because they feel more similar to Australians in many ways. (A12)

> An excerpt from discussion between one participant and me illustrates this further.

> A3: With these people [other immigrants], I have this common—experience: communication. It just means you will be understood, and they will be understanding more.

> Soucie: It sounds to me like the Americans are not as willing to be patient with someone whose first language is not English, whose culture is different. They're not as patient as somebody who has experienced it?

> A3: Yes, that right. I believe it's because—not because they are bad people—but they feel like if you're here, you're supposed to know everything.

One participant spoke of the connection she sees between people who are similar and how that doesn't extend to her but is the type of connection she is trying to make.

> I'm looking at them more to connection and bonding type is like—you' re White, you see another White person, automatically you just gravitate towards each other. You like each other because you feel like you speak the same thing, language, you understand the same things, your jokes make sense to you, your comments and work styles make sense to you. (A11)

Ability to better adjust to new circumstances. An outcome of working with others who have shared the same experience of coming to the United States is that particularly those new to the United States feel they have someone who gets them, who is more patient with them, and

allows them to adjust better to their new circumstances. This ability to adjust, to have someone

they consider a mentor, gives them "space" to share their ideas and creativity in the workplace.

Some participants suggested a company actively assigning immigrants to the same projects or

work teams can help facilitate this, as in this excerpt of an exchange from the interview:

> A3: They [the company] can bring people who come from different cultures to work together. People from different cultures would help [with creativity] .. This is really something that would help.

> Soucie: So, having more diverse employees who are like you—either from your country or from your region—would be more helpful?

> A3: Yes, I think so. For one thing, when you can see that there are people like you around and you are not alone [it helps]. And the other thing is that when you communicate with them, you understand better, I think, because you somehow are in a similar situation. And when I talk to them, I find it easier to communicate. Not everybody assumes that you know everything, you know the culture, you know the language, and you don't need .. they [Americans] don't try harder to listen to your broken English.

> ***Connecting with "other"***. The ability to connect with "other" was an important theme in

the interviews. In the context of this study, "other" refers to those who are born and raised in the

United States—those who are not also first generation immigrants. This was often described as

the need to feel belonging, to have their outlooks considered, or to build a rapport with "other."

One participant described their home culture as being one where relational interaction is a

regular part of the workday. Rather than needing to schedule time or sitting in meeting rooms,

their culture embraced what he referred to as "informal communication" and the time for that to

occur. The cultural norm of sharing experiences expressed by some participants was also

discussed in the context of "other," specifically pointing out that element is missing in the U.S.

and can be an obstacle to the creative process.

> We buy tea and coffee—But you always have a way to discuss when you have coffee with someone. It doesn't happen very often here. In the U.S., you don't really go to have coffee with someone. You have your coffee and go back to your desk, and you work. In France you are used to saying, "Oh! Do you want to come to have a coffee with me?" and we can go in front of a whiteboard with the coffee and talk about some things. I

think it's a bit individual country here, so we don't have much team or informal communication here. (A8)

Need for belonging. Being able to connect with other people in the workplace was

discussed by multiple participants as an important condition of being able to comfortably share

their thoughts, ideas, and to be creative.

> You have to know people's patterns, because you have to work with people. You know when to call them and ask them for something they would not otherwise do. And that's something I would call here creativity. (A4)

> I've been in this group dismissed by the company because of behavior. So, what happened is they'd been backed by an [ethnic culture] company, right. Culture. And I failed alone. And then, by the way, anywhere I went I felt myself alone. (A9)

> You work more often alone here. You have a problem; you have to face it to find a solution yourself. (A8)

> And so, there were a lot of times where we would .. I was able to get to do that work with my peers, with my manager, with a group of people, and we could whiteboard, we could talk about something. We could read each other's sentiment, we would be able to push back on each other, provide feedback because it all came from a place of like, I think I can push back and share this with you because it's going to come from a good place. I know you; I have this relationship with you. (A13)

> It is going to curtail my desire to be creative if you're going to do something and you're not going to include me. (A7)

The need for belonging is a great motivator or obstacle for some participants. For them,

not feeling like they belonged impacted their ability to share or to be creative in the workplace.

As explained by participant A12,

> I think creativity .. you feel vulnerable when it comes to creativity, so I think that takes the biggest hit [when you don't feel a sense of belonging]. (A12)

They described being aware that what others see first is their differences, that they are

foreigners, and feeling like they do not belong.

> I think also potentially when you're first getting to know people, like the thing that they know about you that you're different in some way. And so that's what you end up thinking about, and so I think that makes you feel even, that really accentuates that feeling of not belonging .. And a spotlight on the difference rather than on the similarity.

I do think definitely it can impact that creativity because you don't feel as comfortable working ideas or not sure how it may be perceived. (A12)

I take it as the norm because I'm a foreigner here, so, for everybody I meet, I just assume they don't trust me. I get that feeling they don't trust me because they don't know me .. I came in understanding that I'm a foreigner anyway. (A11)

Some participants took an active interest in others or looked for a guide or mentor to help them, which allowed them to build the connections they were looking for, or to feel on more solid ground.

I show interest in anything that anyone has to share. (A6)

I'm a very self-motivated person, I try to do what I want to do regardless of what somebody else says, as long as .. if I have only one person who maybe trusts me, believes in me, I hold on to that. Then, I kind of get the energy from that, right? I look around and find one champion and just hold onto that. (A11)

Others realized that time was a factor, and they had to take things slowly and in stages or give it the time to creative these connections and feel like they belonged.

Once you've proven yourself in one or two facets, it almost goes without saying that "this guy knows what he's talking about." Then once that happens, then an equal is finally found, therefore we can finally converse on a professional personal level . . . They're willing to share, they're willing to bring you into "the family," if you will. To help you out. (A6)

I think the main point, the main thing for me was just that type of belonging. That was the biggest barrier to me. And just the time that it took to establish that. (A12)

I feel like I do go the extra mile, I still try and accommodate the fact, that connection if I have to do some digging, some searching to find it. Sometimes, it might not be the physical appearance, it might not be the nationality, but there's always something that I'm connecting to somebody. (A11)

Safe space to share ideas. An outcome of feeling like one belongs is the creation of a safe space in which to share thoughts and ideas. This sharing makes a person feel vulnerable, and that is not quite as easy to do before relationships are established. This is true if the relationship is with the boss or with others team members. Some participants specifically mentioned the

relationship with their bosses or supervisors; others mentioned the importance of the individuals

with whom they work or the larger team in general.

> I mean, when your boss is friendly it gives you a good opportunity to share and be creative, maybe. Yeah, I believe it can help. (A3)

> I would say a team, that is where we've had relationships outside that team setting, where those relationships are strong and there is a level of sort of comfort with each other is when I would say the creative spaces, for me personally, the creative spaces come through pretty naturally, pretty easily. (A13)

> One participant spoke about her experiences in organizations who worked hard to ensure

their employees—no matter where they were from—felt like they belonged and were included.

Her story is an example of one possible outcome of providing the right environment to build

these connections. It touches on both the need for belonging and providing for it, as well as the

need to maintain your own identity.

> That's sort of, you know, both in terms of how we kind of thought about these small things in a work group setting to just more how do you create that sense of belonging and having these sort of groups of people who came from a different culture feel like they can have both the cultural identity but also an identity within the larger company I think was a very conscious effort. So, it's really certainly helped. (A13)

> **Primary dimension: Stepping out of Comfort Zone.** Stepping out of Comfort Zone

was mentioned many times over the course of the 14 conversations. Coming to a new country

with new cultural situations and approaches to work, many participants talked about their

struggles in stepping outside what was normal and comfortable for them and into embracing and

responding in ways more culturally normal to their new work environments.

> I think at the very beginning [it] definitely took time for me to get used to the more expressive culture and also people trying to do new things without any previous experience. I found that a little bit of challenge. So, it's about me recognizing it and trying to actively get out of my comfort zone. (A2)

> I would say—I don't know that it is creativity—but I would say what I had to become more conscious about is the formality and the informality when the creative space interacts with human interaction, especially in a structured setting. The way I was raised, the way I thought, where I come from .. The way you think about authority and the way

you think about place in the organization and how you want to be both respectful for position and title. That I would say is kind of where I pause over time to make that adjustment around where to push the boundaries. (A13)

There are a few sub-dimensions under Stepping out of Comfort Zone that each have their own unique expression. *Being vocal* and *taking risks* were both significant to participants and share the same or similar conditions and impacts. Table 4.4 shows the conditions, dimension, and sub-dimensions for Stepping out of Comfort Zone.

Table 4.4

Explanatory Matrix—Stepping out of Comfort Zone

Condition	**Dimension**/ Sub-Dimension	Impact/Consequence
	Stepping out of Comfort Zone	
Psychological safety	Being vocal (sharing ideas)	
Organizational risk taking Autonomy	Taking risks	Being empowered "Space" for creativity
Being overlooked	Advocating for self Accepting credit	

Being vocal or sharing ideas. The sub-dimension of being vocal or sharing ideas was mentioned many times. Several participants felt this was one cultural norm of their new work environment that was not a natural or comfortable fit for them. Some spoke about how they had to push themselves into being vocal or sharing their ideas. For some, they had been able to push past their cultural boundary early in their transition to the U.S. workplace, while others said it took them longer to adjust. All of the participants who identified "being vocal" as a struggle were women.

There are times when I've had to be very deliberate and intentional, more kind of be conscious about kind of having to raise my hand and either state something or make sure

that my point is heard, make sure that I have something to contribute too. I'm formulating a thought in my head before I speak. It certainly has required me to become more conscious and deliberate about making sure that I say something and not always be asked. (A13)

We are also more reserved in speaking up . . . I also feel like the stereotype has something to play in it too. I don't want to be the person who got stereotyped to be typical quiet Asian who would follow orders and it just .. actually, kind of pushed me to go a little out of my comfort zone to just try to speak up more. (A2)

 I definitely have just been saying, like suggesting things even if I haven't been getting as caught up in that internal style of like, "Should I say something? I don't know if it's the right thing." I've been trying to just focus on sharing it and seeing what happens, and I think that naturally just came with feeling more comfortable being. Because I've been here for a year now, so it sort of just evolved out of time but also just pushing myself to do it despite feeling uncomfortable. (A12)

Some wanted to make sure that I had captured the difficulty faced by immigrants in general—not just them personally—who came from cultures where openly sharing ideas or speaking up was not only not the normal cultural response but was not readily accepted.

In the U.S., people tend to speak up about their new ideas, and very often take action as they are rewarded to do so .. From my experience, in [my home country], we are less motivated to action on the innovative ideas, as failure is less tolerated. (A2)

 I would say like a lot of times you're in a setting where you're having to think out loud. And I would say that I see people from Asian cultures holding back on that. (A13)

Psychological safety. From the perspective of pushing past comfort zones to being able to share their ideas, the conditions of psychological safety emerged. In addition to pure grit in being able to force oneself past their cultural norms to participate in openly sharing ideas, participants shared that doing so is easier when they are in an environment of where they felt safe to share, comfortable with their environment. This can be at the team or group level, from their managers, or from the organization's culture in general.

Once I am more comfortable, I'm more able to do that [share ideas]. (A12)

So, when I say being vocal and how that interplays with creativity, you know if you don't point out the ideal solution, if you're not comfortable enough to voice out an alternate view, then there's no place for creativity to begin with. (A2)

It is the situation that has to take place before you can actually be creative, and the way you do that is how well a rapport you have with your management, how well a rapport you have with your peers where you have proven yourself that yeah, this guy can be a starter, he can be a closer. (A6)

Not having psychological safety was identified as a clear barrier to being vocal, sharing ideas, and to creativity itself.

I think because I felt like .. I definitely felt there was a barrier to my creativity because I didn't feel I had a voice around sharing my creative ideas or I didn't, I sort of doubted my own creative thinking more because I wasn't sure how it would be perceived or received. So, I guess I found myself holding back a lot more or doubting myself as a result. (A12)

And they're [management] complaining about their employees, but when you have a discussion with them you find there has not been an attempt on their part to reach out to the employees and say, "Okay, what can I do to help you?" It's more—"I'm reaching out to you because you're not doing your job, I need you to do your job." And that creates a very psychologically unsafe team environment, I think. It's hard to produce, let alone be creative, when you're in that kind of environment. (A1)

And for some, feeling that the work environment is lacking in psychological safety prevents them from sharing all their ideas or giving all they could or would in their home culture.

I would tell you that it [the interplay between ethnic and organizational culture] has probably negatively impacted my creativity because I'm always measuring to see if it's a safe decision .. I would carry more respect in that [home] culture than I would in the American culture, in the American workplace. To an extent I am not always thinking through what I have to do, it's more natural [in home culture] because I'm not looking for a .. is this a safe decision? (A7)

Taking risks. The concept of taking risks was discussed during the interviews in a couple of different contexts—from the organizational point of view, in that the organization allows for or embraces risk taking and from the personal point of view, meaning the individual is willing to take risks. Under the umbrella of the primary dimension of Stepping out of Comfort Zone, the focus is more on the personal approach to risk taking. Some participants described how taking risks can lead to greater creative output.

I think on our project I see creativity in the risks that we take as well. And it is risky for us to make all these decisions because generally you want the framework, you want to be able to say here's exactly what the customer wants. And it is a step by step, and it's not in

this project. There is risk taking in that. And also too I think, just a space for the risks as well. (A1)

 If I was young, I'd like to work for a company that allows me to fail, so that I can continue to learn and .. I mean, those are the best lessons of life. (A6)

Organizational risk taking. Organizational risk taking can and may be a condition which

allows for personal risk taking to occur. When the organization is oriented toward taking risks

versus being risk averse, that leads to ways of working that allow for individual or personal risk

taking to occur in the workplace. Being risk averse or fearing failure on the part of the

organization, however, can impact an individual's willingness to take those risks that may lead to

creative output.

> Ingenuity requires expenditure. It requires experimentation. It requires allowing me to fail so that I can then succeed for the company, and that's not seen today. (A6)

> It's done by navigating that process to see if it's successful. I don't even know if it's based on success, I think it's the perception that something bad could happen, that something negative [could happen]. So, proving that one idea does not have any negative impact .. The risk factor. Then saying, "Okay so that initiative worked, that outreach effort worked. What if we did it this way? Oh look, that minimizes .. it didn't have any negative impact. Oh, okay great, now let's look at how it has some positive impact." (A7)

> There was a sense of, sort of fear like there was a "Gotcha!" [in the organization]. Like I'm not sure who has my thoughts kind of thing. And that doesn't necessarily bode well because you are always not wanting to take that risk. You were getting more and more conservative and that never allowed you to kind of take those big bets and those leap forward type options and solutions. (A13)

An organization's intolerance of failure seems to be more impactful on those who are

immigrants, as they feel the risk for them is higher.

> I function on the perception that there is less forgiveness of my failures. If an action I take, if an idea I have doesn't work or creates negative risk, the price that I will pay may be higher than that of someone else. So, I am more careful. (A7)

Autonomy. Another condition of risk taking is that of autonomy. Many participants

described their ability to flourish and be creative in an environment where they are given

autonomy. Participants used the terms *autonomy*, *flexibility*, and *freedom* to describe this element

of an organization's culture. Being given the space and trust to get things done in the way they

felt was the best fit provided participants with an environment which allowed them to express

their creative selves.

> I think that creativity is based on the prospect of freedom. (A7)

> He just let me be and again, I mean, I blossomed. (A14)

> From my perspective, I think the thing that would make me most creative is flexibility. I like to have flexibility in my working hours, in what I get to do, in what I want to pursue. I need flexibility. And this is how I think I would be creative. I'm not saying, like, no direction. I would like some direction, but in terms of execution of what I'm given? I need flexibility. (A10)

> I was given the autonomy to go the way I wanted to go. I mean, there is a little bit of exterior borderlines, but I felt like I did have a voice in .. This is what I think, this is how I think we should do it. (A11)

> ***Being empowered***. Being empowered was described as an outcome or impact of being

given autonomy, flexibility, or freedom to take risks. When participants felt empowered, they

felt like they were able to give their whole creative selves to their work.

> I didn't have a lot of constraints and a lot of interwork and a lot of "Let's have a meeting to talk about the meeting to plan the next meeting." At the time when I was able to be creative .. yes, you have projects, but I was allowed experiments and trying them. As long as I was working on the projects and moving things forward, no one was telling me "You have to finish it by next week because that's when the deadline is." (A14)

> Present to me a situation where I am empowered to come up with a solution where I can actually think solutions from a whiteboard, a blank sheet of paper. That's where ingenuity comes into the picture. (A6)

> I always do better when I'm given the authority to make my own decisions and take ownership of the solution and deliverable. (A2)

> There's a lot of questions asked and basically we're really encouraged to give feedback from different backgrounds. They really value that diversity of thought. (A12)

> Participants who manage others also discussed empowerment, and how empowering

others makes an impact on their role as a leader and to the people they manage, as well as how

being in an organization or working for leaders who do not empower others makes an impact.

Yeah, I think, too, you're not going to get employees that take risks unless they feel a sense of empowerment and that empowerment doesn't have to be where they sit in the hierarchy, that empowerment just has to be literally making their voice feel valued. (A1)

The transition from when you are a slave to someone to when you are leading is the empowerment stage. (A6)

Space for creativity. The concept of *space* arose several times during the course of the

conversations in various contexts, but it ties back to the concept of creativity in several ways. It

can show up as being given space to think and produce creatively. It can be shared space or

shared responsibility for creativity to happen. Many participants discussed the idea that creativity

in the current workplace, at least for the types of roles they fill, needs room to grow or is a shared

endeavor.

A lot of times we have to be very imaginative on how we problem solve or how we deliver things .. Who can I put in charge of this, who can I empower? Who can I sort of hand off the creativity to? So, I think a lot of creativity is a shared responsibility of, you know, here's what the process might look like, but you have the expertise, you finish it. You talk to me about what the final project could potentially look like. So, there is a lot of shared space for creativity. (A1)

They thought given my background as a clinical psychologist, I'd have some ideas about [a certain project]. About how to develop connection. And so, they give you space. So you have the space to think about that and just work with that. That's an example of how they provide those opportunities creatively. (A12)

Because there's an ability to kind of meet each other at where they're at and complete each other's minds, have sort of a level of sort of understanding around where we're coming from, have those relationships form into trust. And that creates a space in which we are able to work together and operate very effectively. And also, for me personally, be able to kind of not hold back and kind of think out loud, brainstorm, and kind contribute at a creative level. (A13)

When we talk about micromanagement, everybody agrees this is a frowned upon style .. they need to give people room for creativity. (A10)

Advocating for self or accepting credit. Some participants felt in their current and/or past

work environments, they were not seen, or were passed over for something. In other cases, they

felt uncomfortable in sharing their own accomplishments. Advocating for themselves, calling

attention to their efforts, or taking credit for their own work was in many cases outside their zone

of comfort and difficult to do. Given the cultural norm of this in the United States, it became an

important skill to learn to master for the continued growth of their careers.

> Another thing that I think is like a deeply inherent Australian trait is .. so no one likes to feel like they're uber boasting or anything similar to that. So, it's like quite hard to have a voice at times and to share experience because people don't really do that in Australia. People will find they're quite uncomfortable. Whereas I think in America, yeah, there's much more of a culture of advocating for yourself or being more vocal around your experience. (A12)

> I actually feel like I've had to work harder for some of the reasons that I mentioned. So, I'll give you an example: a lot of times, most of the time, I tend to speak in "we" as opposed to "I." And this notion of, I think, being able to present an idea as your idea versus this is how we have worked together, when there may not have been that many people. I mean, anytime you work in a social setting, shared as a group, it's a group effort. But there are times when it probably is not as much of a group effort as it is an individual effort. (A13)

> I've always been the type of person that I sometimes think that I should be maybe a little bit more selfish, in the sense that I am always thinking about how to make the programs successful and how to help people to be successful and sometimes I forget a little bit about myself. (A14)

> ***Being overlooked***. The feeling of being overlooked was expressed by several of the

participants. Often, they attributed this condition to be a direct result of being an immigrant, seen

as a foreigner. It could result in being passed over for leading projects, for promotions, respect,

or other benefits that they see as more freely given to those who are born in the United States.

This condition required them to engage in the previously mentioned sub-dimensions related to

standing up for their work and accepting their credit. In some cases, participants felt their

language abilities led to being overlooked. Some participants shared stories that they requested

not be discussed in my final dissertation which are examples of times they have been passed over

to lead important initiatives, to take on a leadership role, or were undermined in roles they

already held. This was related to the fear of being recognized by their stories and of potential

consequences if that were to happen. These stories will not be shared. This appears to be related

to the same or similar type of fear encountered in my difficulty in finding participants to begin

with, though in this case more centered around a fear of retaliation from their work organization

if their identity was recognized in the stories they shared.

> [Being overlooked] curtails my desire to be creative. (A7)

> Coming from the Ethiopian culture, I found it a little bit more difficult to communicate smoothly and that affected me in the happiness of the workplace. (A3)

Primary dimension: Being a Conduit. The primary dimension of Being a Conduit is a

different from the other dimensions in that it is the one dimension that is an external

manifestation and the benefit is for those outside of the individual. The primary dimension of

Relating is also external, but the benefit can be for the individual, "other," or both. The other

primary dimensions—Habituating and Stepping out of Comfort Zone—are internal. They are the

needs and internal experiences of an immigrant navigating their new cultural environment in

order to be creative. Being a Conduit is a dimension that finds the individual in the role of

helper—to other immigrants, to organizations who benefit from their cultural intelligence (CQ),

and at times between cultures. Several participants discussed how their experiences as an

immigrant provided them with a level of CQ that allowed them to translate situations and gave

them the ability to explain and/or assist other immigrants in navigating the cultural differences.

As well, their higher levels of CQ proved to be valuable to their workplaces and provided them

with the opportunity to share insights, give direction, and be a conduit between those United

States born and immigrants. Additionally, they were also sought for their thoughts on

communicating with non-immigrant minorities. This was an actual, formal job for some

participants, while for others their workplaces actively but informally sought their input in

multicultural situations. As Participant A6 said, "If there is an asset to being born outside of this

country, it would be cultural awareness." While the other primary dimensions are more for the

benefit of the individual, this dimension found participants "paying it forward," or using the skills they were able to develop through their experiences to assist both immigrants in developing their own skills, and their workplaces in becoming more cultural aware, which itself provides a better environment. It is worth noting that some individuals find themselves in the role of Being a Conduit without a desire to be in that position. This can be a negative for them, particularly when it is not their job or part of their job and instead becomes a required responsibility that produces extra work and focus. The conditions and sub-dimensions for Being a Conduit are seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Explanatory Matrix—Being a Conduit

Condition	**Dimension**/ Sub-Dimension(s)	Impact/Consequence
	Being a Conduit	
Earned respect/trust	Facilitating communication	Engagement
Respect due to skills and insights		
Organizational or team need for cultural insights	Translating between cultures	Stronger cultural representations and understanding
		Knowing your audience/Taking Multiple Perspectives

Facilitating communication. Formally or informally facilitating conversation or communication between groups of people was described by several participants as a role they found themselves playing in the workplace. Initially, they may have stepped into this role by noticing and filling a gap. At times, the need to have a facilitator may be caused by a deficit in language skills.

I think it's my personality, where people can communicate openly with me, because I show no ego, I show no pride. I show interest in anything that anyone has to share. They use me as a conduit for communication. Moreover, if I wasn't in the picture, these guys wouldn't talk to one another, so I can facilitate conversations. (A6)

I'm always the one that's in the room trying to communicate across cultures. (A7)

If there is miscommunication, that slows down the creative process. And a lot of times there is a need to mitigate conflict or re-communicate. So, it's a constant struggle. (A1)

Earned respect/trust. While the participants who found themselves playing this role did

so because of their experiences and, in some cases, willingness to take on that role, it would not

have become possible within an organization without leadership acknowledging their abilities

and insights as valuable. Thus, the respect that was earned over time is the condition under which

the dimension of facilitating communication can be realized. Participant A7 spoke about the

obstacles to earning that respect from the outset and the unequal distribution of respect.

A7: I don't know that it's necessarily just immigrants. I think in corporate America it is a challenge. I don't think respect is given to immigrants or people of color initially.

Soucie: So, if you're White you're given that respect automatically? Or is it still something that has to be earned but maybe a sliding scale?

A7: No, I think you're given more. You can lose that respect, but you automatically come in with the respect. I come in with nothing .. I come in with a blank slate and I have to earn the respect.

Some participants spoke about how they earned the respect, not only in leadership but

also among the various groups with which they would have to work. Earning this respect was

essential in building trust, and that trust provided them with the opportunity to connect, build

rapport, and to become the conduit between groups and cultures.

They will not listen to you until they see that you are smart enough to carry a conversation with them. You have to prove yourself to them before they will respect you. (A6)

I had to earn that respect [from the company], just saying. It [my experience] previously didn't make a difference until they [the company] had to pay the price [for not being culturally aware], to see that I was the person that was able to navigate them through that process. (A7)

I earned his [the boss's] respect because, very quickly, he saw that he doesn't have, he didn't have to tell me what to do. I have the initiative and the drive for me to push myself so that he didn't have to do it. (A14)

Others noted that Americans have an expectation of respect being given to them, earned or not, and how they (the participant) do not take that respect for granted but instead focuses on their work. This in turn can result in earning the respect "others" see as their right.

I feel like my [American-born] colleagues—they expect respect and recognition all the time .. and they would complain about not having it or not being respected as an individual or personal time as much as they should deserve, and I personally don't feel that way. I feel like they asked me to do something, I'd better get it done. (A2)

Engagement. An impact or outcome of facilitating communication, and the condition of respect or trust that allows it to happen, is that of engagement. This could be engagement on the part of the person doing the facilitation of communication but could also mean engagement on the part of the parties who are the recipients of this facilitation. For example, the organization may be more engaged with/better in touch with the needs of the demographic group(s) with whom the individual is facilitating communication. The demographic group(s) may be more engaged because of this facilitation and the possibility it allows them to understand more and provides an avenue for them to share.

Have they listened to me from Day 1? No, that's an earned respect .. That's because I've navigated challenging situations for them, and it's come out for the better. (A7)

Being born and brought up abroad allows me to better understand very many disciplines, across very many cultures. [One of my biggest assets is] being able to understand their way of speaking English, and then being able to be converse with them and just play a liaison to the guys who claim they know English so well, but they don't have the patience to understand them. (A6)

Translating between cultures. One official or unofficial role some participants find themselves playing is translating between cultures. This is less related to language translation and relates more to a gap in cultural understanding. This gap can impact the way a team or

organization approaches or addresses the needs of diverse groups. Some participants found themselves in a position of translating between cultures voluntarily trying to help.

Organizational or team need for cultural understanding. The deficit in cultural awareness is often on the part of the organization for which the participants are working. It can also be in relation to their team's need for cultural understanding, manifested by standing up for others who are from another culture to those who do not understand the cultural nuances. For some participants, the focus on trying to fit in, taking notice of everything around them so they can code-switch appropriately, has given them the ability to be more aware of not only culture mismatch in their world but in others. They have perfected the skill of translating between their natural response and what it should be in the current cultural surroundings. This gives them the insight of being able to communicate between cultures.

> In developing programs or marketing for developing programs that [focus on] outreach [to] the population and probably, [I'm] more helpful in that I've been helping navigate those projects .. it's just the little subtle cultural differences that come up, the pictures that are used. If [the company] does advertising through a video, I'm better able to pick up and say, "Everybody isn't able to see that quite the same way you do." (A7)

> I always feel compelled to speak up on calls when I feel like someone is being attacked based on their geographic location or based on a misunderstanding of something. I always want to play devil's advocate to make sure everyone on the call's aware. And I always bring up the response, "Did so-and-so understand the ask?" .. I'm amazed by adults who have the inability to think well maybe so-and-so, who's second language is English .. is facing certain issues and maybe they're afraid to come to me because of cultural values, because of my tone, because I'm the manager. (A1)

For one participant, her focus on trying to fit in, taking notice of everything around her so she can code-switch appropriately, has given her the ability to be more aware of not only culture mismatch in her world but in others. She has perfected the skill of translating between her natural response and what it should be in her current cultural surroundings. This gives her the insight of being able to communicate across cultures. She said,

Because we [immigrants] translate every day, I'm better able to translate situations around me. Then I'm able to translate situations around me faster. I do this in my everyday life. (A7)

Stronger cultural representations and understanding. Participants who find themselves

in the role of being the cultural guide within their organizations do so for a number of reasons.

As mentioned, their work helps the individuals for whom they are translating to get a better and

stronger awareness about and foothold into their new cultural environments. As well, the

organizations can use the newfound awareness to help in their efforts to be more inclusive,

particularly internally for their own teams. This provides a better work environment for their

employees. This outcome has a positive result not only for the immigrant working to translate

across the cultural nuances, but for all employees.

We've started to get more conscious around not just using terminology, like, "Oh, we're going to quarterback this thing," .. "So and so is going to quarterback this thing." This specific team had people from Asia, from Singapore, Japan, China, India, people from Europe .. just the term "quarterback." There were times when you would have to, like, take a pause and explain it just to make sure that people outside the U.S. understood what that term meant. (A13)

Knowing your audience/taking multiple perspectives. Knowing your audience is the

hallmark of a good facilitator. The need to not only understand where an audience is coming

from—literally and metaphorically—but also what it is they need proved to be an important skill

for some of the participants in their ability to navigate and translate across cultures.

Okay, so I think where you can translate my experience to creativity and problem solving is probably based on cultural exposure, so I am better at—especially coming from a community development side or even other regulatory issues—I am better at understanding another Black person's perspective. (A7)

How do I compose a problem, which is a design task, and facilitate communication across the masses? One of the ingenious things that I've been complimented on is being able to ferment complex systems and make them simple enough that all walks of life can understand .. I try to ferment what it is they need in the right size, form, fashion. If they ask more questions, I can facilitate it in detail. (A6)

I've been immersed in culture, so I'm able to pick up other .. I'm more sensitive to what other people are saying and I'm more sensitive to reading people. (A7)

Through their ability and act of presenting information in the way of meeting people where they are, some participants assisted others in feeling empowered and helped to create an environment of inclusivity. This also can result in the establishment of a mentor-mentee relationship. Several participants spoke about the need for or their role as a mentor. Those who take on a mentor-type role are those among the participants who have been here the longest, while those who are seeking mentors are those who had been here much less time. Those seeking mentors are not always looking for someone who is also an immigrant, but as discussed in the section on Relating, for someone having that connection and who better understands their experiences.

Core dimension: Cultural Pivoting. According to Kools et al. (1996), the core dimension holds the most explanatory power of the phenomenon being studied. From the data analysis, the core dimension of Cultural Pivoting was identified. Cultural Pivoting is the process of being able to move between a person's home cultural responses and the cultural responses considered the norm of their new host country. In cultural pivoting, individuals faced with a situation decide on the best response, pulling from their varied experiences. It is a unique discovery of the core dimension because the core dimension actuates different primary dimensions depending on the context. Table 4.6 shows the conditions and sub-dimensions for the core dimension of Cultural Pivoting.

Table 4.6

Explanatory Matrix—Cultural Pivoting

Condition	**Dimension**/ Sub-Dimension(s)	Impact/Consequence
Faced with a problem to solve, task, or situation And Pulling from the primary dimensions, past experience, personal insights	**Cultural Pivoting**	Being "shut down" – negatively impacts creativity Use home cultural responses Risk criticism for "wrong" behavior, which negatively impacts creativity Not constrained by cultural limitations/expectations

Because of the depth of possible responses they have at their disposal, foreign-born professional workers can determine whether choosing the current culture's "normal" response or choosing a response from their home culture (or other cultures with which they have experience) is a better fit. They may react to a situation by subconsciously "choosing" their home cultural response because they don't know the new response yet, or by automatic default. Later, after experience in learning the new culture's situations and normal responses, they may analyze the situation and make a conscious choice about which response to choose. Here is an exchange about this phenomenon.

> A14: So, for him [former boss], allowing me to do the work [no one else could figure out] he was, like, "See? [A14 name] came, this Mexican guy that can barely speak English came and he's doing experiments that post-docs have been trying to do for several years and they haven't been able to get them to work."

> Soucie: And do you think that your home culture, coming from Mexico, and needing to be innovative and creative and find alternative ways to even start the experiment, do you think that allowed you a lens to look at problems differently than your American co-workers?

> A14: Absolutely. I think that you hit the nail on the head, that's exactly what I think. Because I was not constrained by the limitations of instruments or materials. (A14)

Another participant drew historical parallels in discussing oppression, obedience and resistance:

> Poland was oppressed by Germany and Russia. So then in order to lighten the suppressed, oppressive regimes, they just didn't listen, didn't adhere to the rules. So, they tried to make things disorderly on purpose. And that's why I'm thinking sometimes in this country they tell me, "This is the rule." And I say, "Says who?" [They respond] "Oh, it's written." [And I say] "OK, but that's not good enough for me." And they say, "Well it makes sense." And I say, "OK, it makes *your* sense; I'm not sure if it makes *my* sense. So, let me see what happens if I don't listen to the rule" (A4)

Cultural Pivoting, as the core dimension, interacts with all of the primary dimensions for the social process to take place. This takes place in three contexts—self, other, and organization. The primary dimensions take place within one or more of these contexts. Stepping out of Comfort Zone has conditions and impacts within the self and organization contexts. The sub-dimensions under Stepping out of Comfort Zone—being vocal, taking risks, advocating for self, and accepting credit—fall within the context of self-empowering the individual. Within the context of the organization it provides space for creativity to occur, which is beneficial for the individual as they are able to share their creative ideas but also a benefit to the organization. The primary dimension of Relating occurs within the context of self and "other." The opportunity to share experiences with those who have gone through similar experiences builds trust and helps to dispel the feeling of being alone in experience. This helps the self in adjusting to their new country and work environment. Building rapport with "other," which could be other immigrants or those who are outside of the immigrant experience, helps to make the individual feel safe to share their ideas. The building of rapport helps "other" in allowing for that safe space to share.

The final primary dimension that occurs within the context of self is that of habituating. This is the only dimension that occurs only within one context. In this process, sustained code-switching has the potential for creating exhaustion as an individual is making conscious efforts to switch from their normal cultural responses to the ostensibly normal responses of their new country in response to certain situations. Over time and repeated exposure to the new

cultural situation, the responses move from being conscious to an integrated cultural response and one from which the individual can pull effortlessly.

Being a Conduit is the only dimension not to occur within the context of self, instead occurring in either "other" or "organization." When an individual is in the process of Being a Conduit, the conversations they facilitate, the bridges they build, the information they share allows them to assist organizations in providing context and information that gives the organization the ability to build stronger cultural representations within the company. This can be in the form of employee representation or client-facing as in materials and marketing aimed at a wider representation of customers. Within this context, it also provides the organization with the lens by which they can take multiple perspectives, whereas before the individual acted as a conduit, they may not have even realized some perspectives were being overlooked. In the context of "other," their willingness and ability to be that conduit helps them to translate across cultures, allowing "other" to also become more aware of taking multiple perspectives. And when the individual is acting as a conduit on behalf of others, it helps to engage the group they are representing or for whom they are translating between cultures.

Just outside the primary dimensions is the main driver of cultural pivoting—the need to solve a problem, complete a task, or navigate a situation. Being faced with this requires creative problem solving and initiates the process of cultural pivoting. Because of the cultural intelligence the individual has from at the very least their own home culture, they are less often constrained in their problem solving by the "limitations" that are viewed through the host country's cultural lens. This allows them to attend to problem solving instead of saying they don't have what they need by way of resources or materials, pulling instead on their prior experiences and cultural knowledge. Using their cultural responses that differ from the "norm" in their new country,

however, contains risks. They risk criticism that they are "not doing it the right way" or that "we don't do that here." This criticism or being shut down on how they are attempting to problem solve can negatively impact creative output, or the willingness to engage creatively.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the findings that emerged from the 14 interviews and the data analysis of these interviews. Through the stories of the interviewees and the nuances within them, emergent trends were identified within three possible contexts: self, other, and organization. The four primary dimensions—Habituating, Relating, Stepping out of Comfort Zone, and Being a Conduit—occur in one or more of these contexts; the core dimension of Cultural Pivoting occurs across all contexts and dimensions. In Chapter V, I will go in depth into the interpretation of the dimensions, processes, and contexts and will complete the final steps of the grounded theory analysis as well as present a visual representation of the dynamic interaction among the primary dimensions, the core dimension, and the contexts in which they emerge. I will also propose the theoretical propositions that are to be considered for this analysis.

Chapter V: Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this research was to explore how the interplay between organizational culture and ethnic culture impacts the experience of creativity in the in the workplace. Using GTM, I engaged in open-ended conversation with 14 highly skilled immigrants who live and work in the United States. In Chapter IV I analyzed and described what they shared with me to uncover the social processes that were central to their work experience and that built a full visual representation and formed a basis for the theoretic propositions.

In Chapter V, I created a visual representation of the findings in terms of the social processes involved in negotiating the space between organizational and ethnic cultural experiences, the conditions under which they occur, and the impact of these processes on the contexts of self, other, and the organization. The use of visual representation is typical in grounded theory studies (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). Taking the transcribed expression of participants and organizing this into a visual heuristic model helps to map the experiences of the participants as well as the lessons learned (or gleaned) from those experiences. This goes beyond just a simple representation of the data; rather, "These models assist the researcher in the process of constructing the substantive theory" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 522). The creation of the heuristic model is not straight-forward, but an iterative process with the researcher constructing, deconstructing, and again reconstructing the data until they are confident their model is a true representation of their participants' meaning (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018). Also in the case of this study, the model took multiple different forms before I was comfortable with the final heuristic model for understanding cultural pivoting.

The Heuristic Model

Figure 5.1 is a visual representation of the process of cultural pivoting as experienced by foreign-born, professional level employees workers living in the United States and working for a U.S.-centric organization.
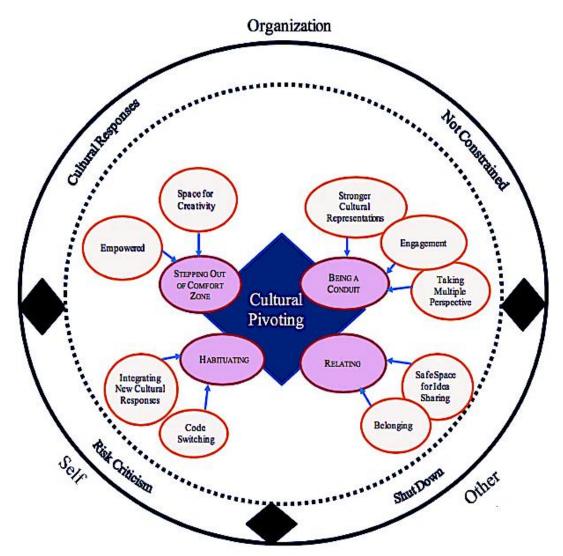

Figure 5.1. Core theme of Cultural Pivoting in relation to other themes.

Visual Model of Dimensions

What follows is a textual explanation of the relation between the different dimensions, impacts, and contexts of the heuristic model.

At the center of the diagram is what emerged from the data as the core dimension of the experience of navigating the self and other in the space between organizational culture and ethnic/national culture—cultural pivoting. An individual who is using cultural pivoting may draw upon any of the four primary dimensions which represent different categories of creative practices—Habituating, Relating, Stepping out of Comfort Zone, and Being a Conduit—in any order depending on the context. For the purpose of explaining this model, I begin with Habituating. As an individual learns about and habituates to their new cultural surroundings. It is highly important to note, however, that this is not a hierarchical model; one does not "complete" all aspects of a dimension and then "move on" to the next. An individual could be experiencing any of the dimensions at any time without relation to length of time in the United States, life experience, or any other identifier. These dimensions can and do sometimes occur simultaneously or an individual can find themselves in Habituating again as they are faced with some new circumstance or situation. There is not "done" or "check mark" as an individual experiences and engages in these dimensions.

These four primary dimensions or categories of creative practices are shown as larger, lavender-colored ovals and placed in and/or near the appropriate context that call for, encourage, or enable the particular creative practice. For Habituating, that context is with self and with organization. The physical overlap between the primary dimensions and the core dimension indicates that possibly synergistic relationships; each primary dimension may occur, and the results of those experiences may impact and allow for a place for cultural pivoting or be a contributor into the knowledge that becomes cultural pivoting. In the case of Habituating, integrating new cultural responses and code-switching come with a risk of criticism if the newcomer professionals "get it wrong." As well, as an individual increases their knowledge

through cultural pivoting, that increased information may be utilized in a way to further develop their skills in the primary dimension. Continuing with Habituating, this can mean, for example, as a newcomer to the United States continues to gain cultural insights about the organizational culture and U.S. culture at large, and build their cultural response banks, it provides them with more experiences from which they can possibly share in Being a Conduit to other newcomers or to their organizations.

As described in Chapter IV, there are three main cultural pivoting contexts in this study—organization, self, and other. Organization is at the top of the domain and is represented by a larger section as it holds the most demanding external dominance over the participants and hence impacts the nature and degree of expression of their creativity. Self and other are, for the purposes of this model perceived as equal parts of the remaining contexts, but also keeping in mind that in societal terms, the macro level, relations between ethnic members and members of the dominant culture are not equal even when their might be functional equality or the ethnic member might have a higher function in the organization. The primary dimensions are placed at the dividing line between contexts when/if they exist in both contexts. For example, Stepping out of Comfort Zone is placed on the divide between self and organization since it interacts with and impacts both contexts. Habituating, however, is located solidly in the middle of the section on self, as this internal experience of response in view of anticipated degree of risk impact occurs primarily if not completely within that context alone.

Around each of the four primary dimensions are additional, smaller circles which represent the impact or outcome of these dimensions. Because most primary dimensions occur within more than one context and are placed near or at the imaginary dividing line between the contexts in which they occur, the impacts or outcomes are placed nearer to the context in which

they are most likely to be felt. For example, in the primary dimension, Being a Conduit, the outcome of engagement, falls between organization and "other," but closer to "other" than to self since that is where the impact or outcome is felt or experienced; for instance, someone newer to the United States may benefit from someone who has been here longer stepping into that role of conduit and helping them understand their new surroundings. Stronger cultural representations, though, falls closer to organization as this outcome is meant to represent the increased awareness an organization gains from the worker acting as a conduit, which may result in the organization being more diligent in increasing or changing their output (such as marketing materials) to be more inclusive of other cultural lived experiences. The third outcome of taking multiple perspectives falls exactly between organization and "other" as this outcome can have an impact in both contexts. The entire visual representation of context and dimensions is enclosed within an additional, larger circle of creative problem solving. This is the output or consequence of the combination of context and dimensions. Within that larger circle, there are two main areas—"not constrained" and "cultural responses." The former, "not constrained," indicates that the individual does not have their responses imposed on them; there is, thus, some autonomy. "Cultural responses" refers to the individual's drawing on prior or home cultural responses in dealing with a given situation.

From the expression of cultural responses there are two potential outcomes—"willingness to risk criticism" and "shut down." Displaying or responding to a situation using a cultural response that is different than the expected response requires the individual to risk criticism. This willingness to put themselves out there is a positive, and can result in increased creative output, which would be a positive for the organization as well as self and is therefore placed between self and organization. The negative potential result of putting oneself out there as far as

responding differently than cultural norms is the potential of being shut down. This could occur from a critical response from "other" or from organization and is a negative outcome for all three contexts. Shutting down of cultural responses limits creative output of the individual and potential creative gains for the organization.

The Dimensions as Related to Extant Literature

In the following section, I will discuss the core dimension of Cultural Pivoting in relation to the literature. Cultural pivoting will be further defined in the contexts in which it occurs, and literature will be discussed and viewed in the context of further supporting the new concept of cultural pivoting.

Core dimension: Cultural Pivoting. The concept of pivoting is not a new one. Basketball players pivot when they are holding the ball, one foot firmly placed on the ground, evaluating the dynamic situation on the court in front of them to determine the best action to take in that moment. Businesses "pivot" to increase opportunity, when they feel or find their current course of action or strategy may be at risk, or research may have indicated exploring a new demographic would be beneficial, just to name a few reasons for pivoting. Labeled as "the pivot" by Ries (2009), the concept is that companies, start-ups, and entrepreneurs may need or want to change direction and yet stay grounded in what they already know or have learned, by keeping "one foot in the past and place one foot in a new possible future" (Ries, 2009, para. 4). Ries (2011) defined the pivot as "a structured course correction designed to test a new fundamental hypothesis" (p. 149). In the same vein of research on entrepreneurs is the term "fixation," which can be defined as "established ideas inhibiting people's ability to see things in new ways" (Crilly, 2018, p. 55) which, potentially can deter pivoting.

Grimes (2018) researched the potential for feedback to be perceived as a threat to the identity of the creative originator and presented a model for creative revision for the purpose of "revealing that the capacity to extend the novelty and usefulness of one's ideas is not merely subject to informational constraints but also identity-based constraints" (p. 1692). Grimes (2018) described how creative workers can pivot as, "expressions of how one's self-concept is defined by commitments to testing, validating, and pivoting from one's ideas" (p. 1700). The definitions and uses of both "the pivot" and "fixation," while not used in connection with culture, can apply to these situations, in particular for creativity through cultural filters. The concept of cultural pivoting presented in this study is a new one, but not unprecedented in the literature. As seen in this study, individuals have their feet firmly rooted in their home culture while evaluating the dynamic situation in the workplace in front of them to determine the best action to take in that moment. Fixation on their own cultural norms without the willingness to learn and adapt would be a barrier to their ability to pivot, much in the same way as found with the studies on entrepreneurs. And, as there, feedback on creative output—and in the case of this study, home cultural norms—can be met with resistance and possibly seen as an attack on their self-concept and identity.

Primary dimension: Habituating. The use of the term "habituating" in this study came from the wording used by my participants. Participant A13 said,

> I don't know that it's because it's not necessarily a natural way in which they have grown up learning .. And so I don't know that it's a habituation around how you have learned and grown through an early part of your life. (A13)

Other participants mentioned the word "habit." In this study, I have defined *habituating* as the personal process of assessing a given recurring-type situation for cultural differences and making appropriate behavioral changes to fit the situation; stored in memory banks for future recall and use. This is not a novel concept, though the use of the word habituating to describe it

is unique. There is a great body of research about acculturation (Berry, 2003; Gheorghiu & Stephens, 2016; Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999), adaptation (Batalova & Lowell, 2007; Earley & Ang, 2003; Nishida, 2008; Pornpitakpan, 1999; Thomas & Ravlin, 1995; Thomas & Toyne, 1995), assimilation (Gordon, 1964), and cross cultural code-switching (Molinsky, 2007).

Borden's (1991) theory of culture sheds a useful light on cross cultural interpretation as it distinguishes between three dimensions that are both learned and interdependent: language, physical, and psychological. Communication occurs through language, the environment one is in—and what an individual sees as behavior that is acceptable comprises the physical environment—and the filter and mental concepts by which individuals measure what happens in their environments make up the psychological dimension (Borden, 1991). These three dimensions—linguistic, physical, and psychological—are not the same for every individual. They are among the many different elements that I have called "filters." Therefore, immigrants come to the United States (or to any country they immigrate to) with different filters. These filters impact the strategies an immigrant may choose to use to adapt to a new cultural environment (Baek, 1989; Berry, 2003; Gordon, 1964). Berry (2003) called the strategies *modes of acculturation*. Acculturation is defined as "a multidimensional process resulting from intergroup contact in which individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture take over characteristic ways of living from another culture" (Hazuda, Stern, & Haffner, 1988, p. 690). In 1964, Gordon introduced a seven-stage model of assimilation—a continuum from preservation of home culture by the individual moving through to the eventual demise of their home cultural practices and complete embrace of the new culture. Berry described four categories of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, and deculturation. In Berry's theory,

assimilation was not the only—or necessarily, the desired—goal for immigrants. Immigrants would choose which type of acculturation most fit their lives.

These studies were done on acculturation of immigrants to the overall society and not specifically to organizational acculturation or adaptation. Immigrant workers' acculturation to the workplace may or may not follow the along the same path as their acculturation to the society at large (Alkhazraji, 1997). Habituating and acculturation are not the same thing, though they follow similar lines. According to my research, habituating involves conscious awareness that there may be a different response required in new cultural circumstances, an effort to observe what is different, and a purposeful use of the new behavior. Also different than assimilation, habituating does not mean that an individual must lose their native cultural responses; rather, the new behavior and the normal cultural response become more like tools in a toolbox from which an individual can choose depending on the circumstances. They are aware of taking on the new behavior. It may or may not become their new normal response, but it remains an option from which to choose.

Primary dimension: Relating. The dimension of Relating was defined through the research as making human connections with others in the workplace; sharing experience. Connecting or relating was a powerful image that I heard—directly or indirectly—from nearly all of the participants. The dimension of relating was in two contexts: with "similar," or those who have an immigrant or minority status/experience—and with "other," in reference to those who are native-born Americans. This need and ability to relate to others in the workplace is very important for psychological flourishing (Singh, Selvarajan, & Solansky, 2019). As participant A3 discussed, not having these relationships or connections results in less engagement and happiness in at work, which impacts job performance and creativity. This is supported in the

literature. According to Singh et al. (2019), "Co-worker-support and co-worker-exchange were positively associated with psychological flourishing, which, in turn, was positively associated with employee performance" (p. 587). Co-worker support refers to the level of concern and care an employee think they receive from their coworkers (Susskind, Kacmar, & Borchgrevink, 2003). Co-worker support includes demonstrations of emotional support, such as coworkers who display good listening skills, care toward one another, and empathy (Rousseau, Salek, Aube, & Morin, 2009). It is through co-worker support that employees can build positive feelings and higher levels of self-esteem which, in turn, can impact their performance and ability to deal with challenges in the workplace (Rousseau et al., 2009), with a higher quality of these co-worker exchanges resulting in more positive attitudes and outlooks at work (Sherony & Green, 2002).

For minorities, the supportive contexts prove to be more important than to native-born Americans, particularly Whites, and have a larger impact on workplace performance (Singh et al., 2019). Discrimination and prejudice are conditions that are more commonly experienced by racial and ethnic minorities, which historically has put them in a position of holding a peripheral status in the workplace (Simpson & Yinger, 1953). An inclusive work environment with social support or opportunities for relating are therefore more likely to provide a positive experience for minorities and positively impact their work performance (Singh, Winkel, & Selvarajan, 2013).

Primary dimension: Stepping out of Comfort Zone. This dimension involves a great deal of risk for the individual. Faced with cultural responses that are different from their home country, many participants spoke of having to push themselves into responding in a way that, in some cases, is *against* their own cultural norm, not just different. For example, participants A2 and A13 spoke of their difficulties in being vocal, in speaking up and sharing their thoughts, opinions, or ideas. For them, this was not just a different approach to work but ran counter to

how they had been raised and what they saw as acceptable behavior in the workplace. In the case of Asian immigrants, a common stereotype is that they are quiet, unassuming, lack the ability to be assertive, and are overly respectful, which limits their ability to lead, especially in the case of Asian women (Akutagawa, 2013; Hyun, 2005). Other participants spoke of their initial discomfort in taking credit for their own work and successes; in their own cultures, the expectation is that credit is shared with more focus on the group and less on the individual. This is the case where immigrants come from a collectivist to an individualist society (Hofstede, 1981/2001). For them, it was embarrassing and awkward initially to discuss their work successes instead of downplaying their individual contributions. This is supported by the study of collectivist versus individualist societies (Hofstede, 1981/2001).

A commonly accepted definition of individualism is that of an individual's emotional independence from groups, organizations, or other collectivities (Hofstede, 1984a, 1984b), while the definition of collectivism is "a set of feelings, beliefs, behavioral intentions, and behaviors related to solidarity and concern for others" (Hui, 1988, p. 17). Much of the literature on differences in work culture center on collectivist versus individualist (Alkhazraji, 1997). Western Europe and North American cultures are viewed as individualist (Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Inkeles, 1983), while the cultures of Asians, Latinos, Middle Eastern, and Africans are considered collectivistic (Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Marin & Triandis, 1985). This had an impact on participants' cultural norms, their discomfort with acting in a way contrary to or different from those norms, and their willingness to take a risk and step out of their comfort zone.

Many of the participants in this study, particularly those who had been in the United States longer than others, saw their roles in the workplace to be one that went far beyond the job descriptions. Many found themselves working as a bridge of understanding in multiple ways

—helping the organization understand and translate their work (such as advertising) to better fit the cultural dynamic of the target audience (whether that target demographic was potential customers/clients or other employees).They found that they were helping new immigrants to the United States better understand and adapt to their new cultural surroundings—both at the national and organizational levels.

  Primary dimension: Being a Conduit. The work they were doing at this level goes far beyond what is written in their job descriptions. In some cases, the organization asked for assistance; in others, they offered to be that bridge out of concern for the need to represent the best interest of the minority group or new employee. This additional role that they assign themselves for the most part is that of Being a Conduit. This is a responsibility that they decide to offer to the organization or to their fellow employees, and not one that is required. This is an important distinction when looking at literature on diversity management. Recent research has identified diversity as a critical issue for organizations (Cohn & Caumont, 2016), and much focus has been placed on how organizations benefit from having a diverse workforce, referred to as the business case for diversity (Cox & Blake, 1991; Robinson & Dechant, 1997).

  Organizations and scholars alike have identified the potential benefit that racial and ethnic minorities and women could provide them—both by way of a different and unique take on issues (McLeod. Lobel, & Cox, 1996; Richard, 2000; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004) as well as the possible "in" with customers within those same groups that an organization may gain by having them on board (Avery, McKay, Tonidandel, Volpone, & Morris, 2012; Ely & Thomas, 2001). And though an organization's environment may encourage or pressure a minority employee to pull on their experience and possibly contacts to the organization's benefits, it is, ultimately, up to the employee whether or not they do so (Cha & Morgan Roberts,

2019a, 2019b). This decision of a minority employee to engage apply the "asset" of their minority identity is called "identity mobilization," or "the steps through which individuals can deliberately draw on or leverage their minority cultural identity as a source of advantage at work" (Cha & Morgan Roberts, 2019b, p. 735). This choice of whether or not to be a conduit is in keeping with the findings of my study, which added a nuance to the understanding of this concept in the literature.

It is again important to note the initial understanding or definition of creativity of many of the participants as grand and/or artistic in nature—and how that came to change during the course of our conversation. This in itself is an important finding on two levels. First, the participants' reinterpretation of creativity as they worked through their default definition of creativity was profound. In some cases, it was as if a light bulb suddenly went on and they could immediately see with clarity that they are, after all, creative people. Second, the very implications of solving everyday problems as creative was a bridge to making visible the nature of cultural pivoting itself.

Theoretical Propositions

In grounded theory, the creation of theoretical propositions "provides an opportunity for scholar-practitioners to initiate meaningful and relevant change" (Holloway & Schwartz, 2018, p. 432). The purpose of grounded theory is to develop preliminary theories which represent social processes, going beyond just offering a description of these processes. Rather, the point of creating the theoretical propositions is to explain and represent these processes through any and all relevant contexts in light of the study, in a way that might provide some further explanation and even possible predictions about living through these processes and their experiences within it.

In this study there are three main contexts for experiences of cultural pivoting to occur: with self, with other, and with organization.

Theoretical proposition I. *Cultural pivotors (those individuals who use cultural pivoting) are able to engage more readily in the process of creative problem solving in the workplace.* This proposition suggests a relation between creativity in different areas of work and life. Participants spoke about their unique ability to move between their cultural norms and the cultural norms of their new home, in this case the United States. Some spoke about also being able to draw on cultural norms of a third culture with which they have significant experience, but which was not their own. For example, Participant A14 spoke about his Lebanese grandmother and how his experiences with her and her cultural norms informed his behavior and respect towards women, assisting him in his workplace interactions. Participant A7 described how her ex-husband's ethnicity—different from her own—gave her an additional lens by which to view information and experiences in the workplace. And Participant A1 recalled how being a refugee impacted her and resulted in her purposefully seeking out different cultural experiences in places not her original or "adopted" cultures (Eastern Europe and the United States, respectively) as an adult. She told of how all of these experiences gave her the ability to approach different situations with a great deal more knowledge and insights than those who did not have these experiences or lenses from which to draw. This was particularly evident in participants who had been in the United States for longer periods of time, allowing them the time to learn and to move from instinctive cultural default—reacting to situations with their own cultural norms or cultural default (Soucie, 2015a) without thinking, that is, relying on System 1 responses in Kahneman's (2011) terminology—to being aware of the "new" cultural norm and how their native culture would react to such a situation. This meant being able to choose the best response in any given

situation, a System 2 response (Kahneman, 2011). Cultural pivoting and the ability of individuals to engaging in this process provides a valuable contribution to creative problem solving through the diverse cultural knowledge individuals have gained from their experiences.

As discussed in Chapter II, System 1 thinking "operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 20) while System 2 thinking requires attention, "effortful mental activities," and is the result of purposeful, intentional choice (p. 21). Individuals who have been in the United States for a short duration may still mainly be engaging in cross-cultural code-switching—the short-term, situation-specific adaption of cultural default behaviors to the new cultural norm (Molinsky, 2007)—and are still learning those new norms. From the interviews, it appeared that individuals felt better able to engage in cultural pivoting actively and purposefully once they had a clear and more automatic grasp of the new cultural norms. From literature on cultural adaptation, it is known that individuals will strive to adapt for a number of reasons, including the desire to belong, to not stand out, or to get ahead, just to name a few (Bednar et al., 2010). Since the effort that goes into code-switching may potentially take a toll on the person who is engaged in the cross-cultural code-switching (Molinsky, 2007), the energy and effort to navigate this through what I have called habituating, is probably much higher for those who have been in the new cultural environment for a shorter period of time. Once these behavioral responses become more familiar and comfortable to the individual, less energy is needed for enacting them; the behaviors become part of the overall repertoire of possible responses the person can draw from in those given or similar situations.

This expands on the concepts of cultural adaptation (Earley & Ang, 2003) and cross-cultural code-switching (Molinsky, 2007) discussed in detail in Chapter II. The data here

suggest that once adaptation—or understanding and awareness of acceptable cultural responses—has been achieved, the individual is comfortable moving between this response and former responses more rooted in their original culture (or other cultures with which they have experienced). For Participant A13, the act of being vocal—which required energy and effort in her initial years in the United States—became a much more comfortable option after she had habituated and had been here for some time. She said,

> And so there are times when I've had to be very deliberate and intentional, more kind of be conscious about kind of having to raise my hand .. I think personally for me [I don't have to think about it now], I think just kind of having been in the corporate environment now for the last 20 years, I would say. (A13)

Cultural Pivoting is itself a creative activity; it constantly feeds or ignites a process of thinking or acting outside of well-trodden paths. The actions of navigating and negotiating rules and norms that may be most effective in given contexts requires a level of creativity that may extend into or easily activate other organizational domains of creativity. If these propositions are valid, it follows that cultural pivotors may be more comfortable as creators across work areas than those who do not need to apply creativity as a way of survival, navigation of, and self-preservation in a new cultural environment. As discussed in Chapter II, organizational culture is a difficult concept to define, identify, and articulate (Schein, 1990). However, it might be an easier task for foreign-born professionals—compared to the native-born—to see and identify an organization's culture as they are consistently confronted with norms, values, and assumptions that are not their own, but they have to respond to appropriately. This is in keeping with Morgan's (2006) suggestion that the best way to understand the culture and sub-cultures of an organization is to view the day-to-day experiences of the organization through the perspective of an outsider. Foreign-born professional workers are coming into a new ethnic culture as an outsider to the country. As well they are outsiders as new to the organization. Potentially,

foreign-born professionals may be better able to identify the culture of an organization than native-born and raised employees. This allows them the increased potential to pivot effectively. This concept of cultural pivoting is a new one in creativity research and shines a light on the navigation of culture as an immigrant not as a problem, but as a challenge triggering the creative process. Cross-cultural navigating as a creative activity is also new in the diversity and inclusion literature. The creativity of cultural pivoting underscores the relevance of an individual's original thinking in terms of contextual creativity.

Theoretical proposition II. *Relationships are key—particularly with those who also have immigrant experiences—in providing an environment for better creative problem solving.* Many of the participants spoke of the benefits in having the ability to work with/interact with those who also have lived the immigrant experience. Having a relationship with someone who has experienced what they are currently going through with the continuous code-switching, learning new norms, learning the language, and dealing with people who are unwilling to listen to broken English was identified as a key indicator of being able to not only transition into their new cultural environment better, but also in allowing them to feel a sense of belonging, of not being alone, and that allowed them to be more willing to be vulnerable. Working with others who didn't see them—consciously or unconsciously—as out-group members helped participants of this study to relate and feel a sense of not being alone in their experiences. This, in turn, allowed them to more openly express their creativity. Participant A12, for example, struggled to feel like she belonged, which surprised her given her country of origin didn't appear to her to be that far off American cultural norms. Working with others who were not American—in her case, British colleagues—helped her feel she belonged and allowed her to be willing to be vulnerable and express her creativity.

> I think creativity, you feel vulnerable when it comes to creativity, so I think that takes the biggest hit [when you don't feel a sense of belonging]. Here at first I felt myself a lot more comfortable with the English people in the organization just because they feel more similar to Australians in many ways .. I do think definitely it can impact that creativity because you don't feel as comfortable working ideas or not sure how it may be perceived. (A12)

For some who are newer to the country and culture, the focus was trying to figure out their new environment and cultural responses and how they fit into this new world. Being able to work with people who have lived this experience helped them feel less alone, realize others had lived through it and succeeded, and provided a micro-climate where they could be themselves without worrying about what is the "right" way to be because the person with whom they are interacting "gets it." This shift in focus from habituating/code-switching to a more relaxed state allowed for them to adjust to their new surroundings and, thereby, allowed for greater creativity. Participant A3 spoke of the need for interactions with others who have lived the immigrant experience, whether or not they are from his country or region. He said they don't even need to be able to speak his language but having had that experience makes a difference.

> For one thing, when you can see that there are people like you around and you are not alone [it helps with adjusting]. And the other thing is that when you communicate with them, you understand better, I think, because you somehow are in a similar situation. For instance here I have colleagues who are from [country names not his country]. And when I talk to them, I find it easier to communicate. Not everybody assumes that you know everything, you know the culture, you know the language. (A3)

Foreign-born professionals who have been in the United States longer and have learned to adjust often feel the need to or fill the role of being the person who "gets it" for those who are newer to the country and workplace. Much like Meyerson's (2003) tempered radicals, they found a way to not only survive and thrive despite potentially being marginalized by the organizational culture but to find ways of helping others who may also be marginalized in the organization. Comparing notes and sharing relationship of being marginalized is also a course of thinking critically and creatively about the nature of professionalism and equity in workplaces in various

studies (Essed, 2013; Klein, 2008). Csikszentmihalyi (1997, 2009) discussed creativity as being a product of cultural and social influences, not just a result of cognitive or psychological processes. When talking about the process by which it emerges, he said, "Creativity does not happen inside people's heads, but in the interaction between a person's thoughts and a sociocultural context. It is a systemic rather than an individual phenomenon" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 24). Creativity "is not singular but plural and relational, cultivated within interaction and communication" (Glăveanu, 2016, p. 206).

   Theoretical proposition III. *A sense of belonging facilitates a safe space for creativity to occur.* The sense of belonging is highly important between immigrant and "other" (*other* meaning those who are not immigrants), as well as a sense of belonging to and with the organization. Several participants discussed feeling alienated or of not belonging to the organization, in relation to the people with whom they work, or with others around them; they discussed how this impacted their ability to engage productively and creatively in their work. This suggests that, though cultural pivoting can be an output for those who are new to the workplace in their host country, the simultaneous occurrence of perceived or actual marginalization may potentially suppress this expression of cultural pivoting and creativity. For Participant A12, who was taken by surprise at the number and significance of cultural differences, this feeling of not belonging left her unsettled and uncomfortable with displaying the vulnerability that comes from sharing creatively with others in the workplace. Participant A13 described being able to build that sense of belonging through personal interactions with others on her team, particularly outside the workplace or where the focus was not work, and how that impacted their ability to bond as a team. In some cases, the reactions or expectations of "other"—in this case, those who are not immigrants—can impact the ability or even the chance

to build the relationships and sense of belonging. Participant A3 spoke about how "others" were not patient enough to even listen to his "broken English," or how they misunderstand that if someone lives here they must know everything about the culture, and so approach him from a starting point very different from the one he needs to have. This too can impact the sense of belonging which leads to the trust necessary to feeling comfortable enough to share creatively.

The need for a sense of belonging is widely discussed in the literature around diversity and inclusion. Ferdman and Deane (2014) defined inclusion as "creating, fostering, and sustaining practices and conditions that encourage and allow each of us to be fully ourselves—with our differences from and similarities to those around us—as we work together" (p. xxii). The participants spoke of the need to both be themselves—or "uniqueness"—and the need to feel they belong—or "belongingness." This tension between the desire to hold on to our uniqueness and the desire to be part of the whole or belongingness was discussed by Shore et al. (2011), as well as how there need to be efforts balancing both, for true inclusion to be achieved. The optimal distinctiveness theory looks at the tension that exists between these two poles—the desire to be part of or similar to the dominant group and the validation that comes with it, and the simultaneous desire for uniqueness (Brewer, 1991; Shore et al., 2011). This paradoxical relationship between these two human needs creates this tension as a balance is sought within individuals, showing the complexity in developing inclusivity in organizations.

The study of belonging has become a significant area of focus over the past two decades, particularly in the literature about migration (Antonsich, 2010; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Yuval-Davis (2006) described three analytical levels of construction on the concept of belonging: social locations, identification with or emotional attachments to different groups, and ethical/political value systems. According to

Antonsich (2010), "belonging is used, more or less consciously, as a synonym of identity, and in particular national or ethnic identity" (p. 644) or, additionally, in the context of citizenship. Research on "mere belonging"—the minimal social connection between an individual and another individual or group (Walton et al., 2011)—was shown to increase achievement motivation. Even having a small connection, such as sharing the same birthday, "boosted participants' motivation in the domain at hand" (Walton et al., 2011, p. 529). In contrast, individuals who belong to a group that is negatively characterized or stigmatized can suffer "belonging uncertainty" (Walton & Cohen, 2007, p. 82), which negatively impacts motivation and achievement. Being—or the perception of being—a valued member of a group, such as a work group, has a major impact on the perception of self and ensuing actions (Walton et al., 2011), which, according to my research, also impact creativity and the expression of creativity in the workplace.

   Theoretical proposition IV. *Organizations can benefit from leveraging the insights of immigrant experience and cultural intelligence (Being a Conduit).* The insights of immigrant professionals about employees, clients, and target demographics that are unlike the majority can provide an organization with a look or approach they would not have seen on their own. Participant A7 spoke often about her ability to see beyond what her organization sees in things like marketing materials. Her focus on learning to fit in and taking notice of everything around her so she could code-switch appropriately has given her the ability to be more aware, not only of culture mismatch in her world but in the worlds of others who come from outside the United States. In her view, she has perfected the skill of translating between her natural response (Systems 1 response) and what it should be in her current cultural surroundings. This gives her the insight of being able to communicate across cultures, and being a conduit of understanding

between the organization, with its U.S.-centric organizational culture, and the cultures of other immigrants or minority groups.

In a recent study of professionals of color, Cha and Morgan Roberts (2019b) had expected to find some variation of the conventional thought that minorities succeed in the workplace by downplaying differences, playing by the rules, and working to "fit in" culturally. Instead, quite the opposite was happening. In order to "add value to their organizations and advance their careers, they had chosen not to blend in but rather to stand out, by shining a light on their differences and mobilizing their identities" (Cha & Morgan Roberts, 2019b, p. 2). In recognizing that they held insights that differed from that of their colleagues or organization, members of the studied minorities were able to share those insights to the benefit of the company and to their careers. The four strategies they shared are in direct alignment with the findings in my study: "Offer a unique perspective . . . provide quality control . . . bridge differences . . . and plant seeds of rapport (Cha & Morgan Roberts, 2019a, paras. 3, 6, 7, & 8). They found that "mobilizing your minority identity can unleash your creative energy" (Cha & Morgan Roberts, 2019a, para. 16), as I also discovered in my study.

Theoretical proposition V. *Organizational Environment + Personal Filters = Creative output in the workplace (or Contextual Creativity).* This equation is a different way of viewing creativity in the workplace. Given the parameters of this study, this theoretical proposition is only indicative of the creative experiences of immigrants in the workplace; however, future research may show this to be a representation that is applicable more broadly. The experiences of the participants suggest that the external variables of what is going on in the environment of the organization (the culture and interactions) plus the individual's internal (personalized) cultural

filters, greatly impact the amount, quality, or output of creativity that is displayed and experienced in the workplace.

The desire to study the impact of culture on workplace creativity increased with the growing global nature of organizations today. Hennessey (2015) discussed the need to consider cultural forces and their impact on creative output. The normal cultural responses of an individual to certain situations and how their culture would view or respond to certain issues is a major filter with which they approach their work environments. Over time, the impact of the culture filter may change from initial response to an option in their toolbox of possible responses, as discussed in further detail in regard to Theoretical Proposition I. The responses of the participants show that not everyone from the same ethnic background reacts or responds in the same way, however. Therefore, ethnic culture is likely not the only filter that a person has. In this study, there were two participants from Nigeria, for example, both women. Their narrative regarding their experiences is not the same. Participant A7 has been in the United States longer than Participant A11 by more than 20 years. Participant A7 spoke more about knowing how to navigate the conversations to be able to share her knowledge and expertise, particularly around being an immigrant and the immigrant experience. Participant A11 spoke about actively seeking a mentor, preferably from the dominant group though open to any, to help her achieve success in the workplace but how she was keenly aware that she is a minority and sees that as a drawback. A7 discussed how she is often seen as "the voice" of not only other people from her home country but other minorities, as well—even American born minorities such as African Americans—despite what her personal background actually is, and how she has come to own this perception and developed the ability to leverage it to her benefit and the benefit of the groups for whom she is speaking (i.e., Being a Conduit). While A11 was looking for a guide, A7

was being the guide though this difference may also have to do with length of time in the United States. Baek (1989) identified differences in individual personality as well as demographic differences that may impact the level and speed of acculturation into both the organizational culture of the workplace and society in general in his study of acculturation of Korean employees in the U.S. workplace. These included the types of identifiers and influences I have labeled "filters" such as age, race, gender, educational level, length of time in the United States, number of friends or personal connections, proficiency with the English language, and differences in nationality. Though Baek was looking specifically at the rate and level of acculturation to both the U.S. societal culture as well as organizational culture and not in relation to creative output, his study still makes a connection that context is important when dealing with culture.

Other researchers described individual and demographic differences as having an impact on acculturation (Berman, 1981; Bhagat, 1983; Kim, 1978). These filters can also impact the expression of creativity, as also described by Hennessey (2015) and Amabile (1996) and Amabile and Pratt (2016). The formula for contextual creativity that comes from this research study includes the role these filters play in an individual's ability to express creativity.

As discussed in Chapter II, Amabile et al. (1996) moved away from the then-common approach of studying creativity at an individual level—that is, studying people who had been labeled as creative to identify personality traits of creative people. They began to study the *context* of creativity. They identified that "the social environment can influence both the level and frequency of creative behavior" (Amabile et al., 1996, p. 1155). Amabile et al. (1996) developed a scale called KEYS: Assessing the Climate for Creativity, identifying six support scales and two impediments. Subsequently, Amabile (1998) identified three ingredients for creativity:

expertise, motivation, and creative thinking skills, and in 2016, Amabile and Pratt continued work on the original theory to further develop it by adding in the concept of dynamism.

Almost three decades earlier, Kanter (1988) had already looked at the organization's culture for supports and impediments to creativity in the workplace and had identified that innovation was most likely to occur in organizations that emphasize diversity and collaboration/teamwork; segmentalism was a primary reason for the stifling of creativity. This concept of the influence of an organization's culture on an individual's ability to produce creatively is represented in Theoretical Proposition V by the initial term in the equation, organizational environment. Additionally, Hennessey (2015) pointed to certain aspects of the environment of an individual in relation to intrinsic motivation as playing a pivotal role in the motivation of an individual to complete a task: novelty, curiosity about or interest in the topic, feelings of competence in task completion, freedom from external control or influence, and a sense of play versus work. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1997), work begins to feel like play when individuals are engaged in tasks where they feel their involvement is not mandated or is free from outside control. Amabile (1983, 1996) found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation had nearly opposite impacts on creative output of individuals, intrinsic having positive effects on creativity and extrinsic, negative.

This environmental influence is captured in the first part of the Theoretical Proposition V equation, in this case within the organization. According to the participants, the culture and the environment of the organization in which they are working have an impact on their ability to express their creativity. It can be either a support or impediment, as indicated by earlier studies such as Amabile's (1988). However, what I discovered in my research was that what may act as a support or an impediment is different for different people depending, again, on their personal

filters. These filters may include ethnic culture, age, gender, personal/life experiences, socio-economic status, gender identity, and sexual orientation, among others. The level of impact or influence of a particular filter on an individual is probably completely dependent upon that individual.

Expanding on this work, theoretical proposition V advances that what is identified as a "support" for creative output may not in actuality be a support for everyone, and what is identified as an impediment may not really impede creative output for everyone. This is similar to Hennessey's (2015) ideas on intrinsic motivation and its impact on creative output in the classroom:

> Intrinsic motivation is the product of an individual's inner phenomenological state. A classroom (or workplace) routine that allows one student's (or worker's) intrinsic task interest to flourish may not do the same for another student (or worker). There are a wide variety of social and environmental factors at play here. (p.196)

The differences in the stories of the participants and their personal filters, with ethnic culture being a major filter, much in the same way as Hennessey (2015) described, has an impact in their experiences of creativity. This makes sense given that they are all immigrants. However, Glăveanu (2016) cautioned that simply adding culture as an additional variable in creativity studies "will not suffice" (p. 3). Glăveanu went on to explain that culture plays such a foundational part in the shaping of "creative mind" that reducing culture's influence to just another variable misses the mark. Rather, "Culture is not an isolated factor that can easily be grouped under the general label of environment, but a *condition of possibility* for creativity" (Glăveanu , 2016, p. 3). Theoretical proposition V identifies personal filters as one side of the equation. Filters are not necessarily just additional variables, but more deeply ingrained in an individual—and those filters or parts can and do interconnect and interact with one another in the impact on creativity. Runco and Beghetto's (2019) model of Primary and Secondary

Creativity identified the individual as the locus of creative output but "also acknowledges that the individual has a socio-developmental history and is immersed in a socio-cultural context . . . [and that] social influences are not entirely external to the person, but rather integrated into the person's identity" (p. 9). My model of cultural pivoting and theoretical proposition for contextual creativity take a similar outlook.

Implications for Leadership and Change

In Chapter II, ambidextrous leadership was discussed as a potential leadership style that promotes innovation and creativity by offering leaders the flexibility to switch between exploitation and exploration. But ambidextrous leadership isn't just about the flexibility of switching between exploration and exploitation. "Besides the ability to dynamically adapt one's leadership approach to changing task demands, ambidextrous leadership requires sensitivity to the context a leader is embedded in" (Bledow et al., 2011, p. 9). Certain projects require more or less of exploration or exploitation, depending on the context and circumstances. As well, Bledow et al. (2011) viewed ethnic cultural differences as an "important contextual condition that holds implications for effective ambidextrous leadership" and one that should be acknowledged and considered (p. 2). According to Bledow et al., different cultures have different areas in the innovation process that can be strengths or weaknesses, and those need to be either leveraged or compensated for. In my participant responses, A1 discussed not only her role as a leader and how that plays into the creativity of her staff, but how her creativity is impacted by those in leadership positions above her. She shared that part of creativity in leadership is in the leader's ability and willingness to adapt to the changing conditions of the workplace and the workers; by not doing so, leaders have the potential of shutting down creativity. This is significant because it hints at reasons for lack of creativity or vision among leaders if the organization cannot accommodate

the differences in their employees, particularly cultural diversity. Using the cultural characteristics outlined in the GLOBE study, the findings of my study suggest that cultures need to be taken into account when leading with innovation as the goal.

When beginning this research study, I had thought ambidextrous leadership would play an important role in the implications for leadership and change; what I found more significantly was the need for inclusivity and, particularly, inclusive leadership. With the need for belonging—and the successes many participants had when given the context in which they felt they belonged or were included—it is important to consider the impact of leadership styles that promote this sense of belonging. Accordingly, there needs to be some discussion here on inclusive leadership.

Inclusive leadership means the leader respects and honors the different ways of being. With the increasingly global nature of organizations, traditional hierarchical leadership practices are becoming less and less effective (Ferdman & Deane, 2014; Gallegos, 2014). According to Gallegos (2014), "The context of organizations today is one of ever-expanding diversity in which leadership happens across all levels, roles, and cultures" (pp. 177–178). Dezenberg (2017) stated that "inclusive leadership is relational, participative, and communicative in its approach, which mobilizes the behaviors and actions of organizational members towards inclusive values and practices" (p. 52). Calling this the "inclusion triad," Dezenberg (2017) described a process by which "inclusive leadership, inclusive practices, and inclusive contexts are key interplaying dynamics" (p. 52) with each of them playing a part in fostering an environment of inclusion in an organization. Inclusive leadership is essential as it allows for an organizational culture in which people feel both belongingness and the acceptance and encouragement for their uniqueness. The

five theoretical propositions derived here can provide some clear practical take-aways for organizations and their leaders.

Recognize and reward your experts. One of the clear benefits of having a foreign-born professional on an organization's team/staff is the expertise and insights they bring to the table. If they have been in the United States for a while and have moved past the habituating phase and have developed into solid cultural pivotors, it is important to realize, recognize and tap into the expertise they provide. This is a great win for the organization, and it is a great win for the individual as they receive the recognition and career advancement/growth they deserve.

Provide space for creativity to happen. The word "space" was brought up often by multiple participants during the course of this study. In this context, it means allowing for an individual to not be micromanaged, forced to behave or react in certain ways, and allowing for autonomy, when it contributes to the common good of the organization. Just because a person does not do something in a certain way does not make it wrong; in fact, someone approaching a problem from a different perspective may very well provide you with the answer you've been seeking. More generally, it seems likely that the more open an organization to acknowledging the multi layers of identity of every member of the organization, the more openness there can be for all, not only the foreign-born, to use their personal experience of culture as a creative source to achieving organizational goals (Essed, 2001).

Relationships are key: Provide the right ones. The need for relationships was mentioned consistently throughout the conversations. These fell into two different camps—with "same as" individuals, and with "others." The first one was the need to connect with other immigrants who have gone through what they are going through, who have been in their shoes, and who "get" them. This provides the opportunity for newcomers to let down some of their

guard because they are understood, and the expectations are less stringent. When thinking of team make-up—whether for project teams or the larger team—it is useful to provide access to that type of supporting relationship.

There might be a tendency to lean toward having the foreign-born individual work with all Americans to help them adapt (as natives understand what adapting means) more quickly, but this is not in the best interest of the individual or their creative output. The second type of relationship is the feeling of belonging to "other." This would be those who are not foreign-born; American colleagues in the workplace. The need to sense that connection to others and to the broader organization as a whole was identified as being comfortable enough—feeling the psychological safety—to allow them to be vulnerable and creative. Participant A13 shared how social interactions outside of work helped her to build those relationships with the broader team and for them to see her as "one of them." Participant A12 discussed her hesitation in sharing creatively initially until she felt she had built up that sense of belonging and felt safe in sharing. Provide opportunities for this rapport building to occur. Allowing a degree of personal vulnerability into the organizational culture can benefit all, not only foreign-born members of the organization. It can strengthen the feeling of mutual interdependence and the sense that all contributions are relevant to improve the quality of the organization and its output.

Be patient. As Participant A3 pointed out, many Americans in the workplace feel that anyone already here knows everything about the country—and that assumption caused him issues. He also shared that Americans were not patient with his broken English and would sometimes not give him the time he needed to communicate what needed to be shared. This had a negative impact on his workplace experiences. This type of behavior can shut down an individual's creativity. It is important to be patient. This patience will likely pay off. Patience is

relevant for all, not only for one specific group. The study also reinforces that notion that what is good for a foreign-born can improve the quality of work for all, because of the diversity of this group.

Limitations of This Study

The smaller than optimal number of participants was a clear limitation of the study. I had great deal of difficulty finding individuals willing to participate given the turbulent political climate of the United States. As this study began, the political climate for immigrants and immigration was becoming harsher and more polarized. Stepping forward to participate in a study such as mine became an ever more difficult choice at a time when many newcomers wanted to draw less, not more, attention to their circumstances. This significantly limited the number of participants in the study; the resulting 14 was smaller than an ideal sample number for a grounded theory study.[2]

There was also some initial confusion about what *creativity* can mean within the scope of the everyday workplace. There were some limitations in trying to present and explore these concepts with participants in a way that would be more recognizable to their own experiences. A positive point is that the participants were able to grasp and take a degree of ownership of the concept of everyday creativity through the course of the conversation even if they did not have a clear understanding at the outset. I hope this has enriched their general sense of a creative self.

Another limitation of the study is that although the target organizational culture for the study was large, global organizations based in the United States, the choice was made to only study those who were immigrants to the United States and currently living and working in the United States. A study of global professionals who work for a large, global organization that may

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[2] Thomson (2011) in a broad review and discussion of adequate sampling for grounded theory, concluded that 30 was the optimal target. This was, in fact, my originally planned sample size.

be based in the United States but live and work in their home or other country would be a different and separate study that might or might not produce similar results. It is not intended that the results of this study be extrapolated to be seen as representative of any non-U.S. citizen who works for a large, global organization based in the United States regardless of where they reside.

Because of the complexity involved in the research of each of the three main elements of this study—creativity, ethnic culture, and organizational culture—not all elements and aspects of each of these very large areas of research were able to be discussed in depth. The nature of a grounded theory study is to do a minimal literature review—if any—before the actual research is conducted and then tie results into existing literature. The literature around any one of these three areas is so vast that there was no way to touch upon all of the aspects or elements of any one of them, though an effort was made to choose as relevantly as possible. Continued research studies and review of existing literature will likely bring about more connections than identified in this one study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research with the same focus but greater number of participants would be recommended. Given the fewer number of participants than expected for this study, a greater number would allow for validation or potential alteration in the findings.

Along the same lines of this study, additional research on global employees working for large, global potentially U.S.-based organizations who live and work in their home country or country outside the United States would be a good study to conduct. The findings of this study may be applicable to that demographic, but further research is needed to confirm this.

The focus areas of creativity, ethnic culture, and organizational culture already have vast amounts of research and studies. There are some recent efforts to study the overlap of creativity

and culture from an ethnic perspective (Glăveanu, 2016) and from an organizational perspective (Hennessey, 2015). The study of the overlap of all three is a work in progress, and certainly an area on which to focus additional research. The results of my study are in alignment with several recent works. Hennessey (2015), writing on creativity and culture (both organizational and ethnic), discussed context as a major part of the creative output, saying, "Creativity is also contextualized in the sense that none of us is either always creative or never creative at all. We are sometimes creative—influenced by time and place and choice and constraints" (p. 198). My study found that the ability to be, express, or feel creative is contextual; participants were (and/or felt) more creative in certain circumstances, and that those circumstances were different for every person and, at times, different for the same person in different situations (i.e., contextual creativity).

The recent work of Cha and Morgan Roberts (2019a, 2019b) on strategies and benefits of what diverse workers bring to an organization are very much in line with what my participants shared of their experiences. This was particularly true in the concept of leveraging a minority identity at work and minority identity being an asset, which my participants described in great detail and, in my research, has been identified as Being a Conduit. And through all of this, I have begun a new exploration into the overlap of all three areas of research.

Conclusion

The study of creativity is quite complex; adding ethnic culture to that study increases the complexity levels given the complexity of each of these areas of research independently. In the introduction to his edited work *The Palgrave Handbook of Creativity and Culture Research*, Glăveanu (2016) discussed this difficulty in researching the interconnectedness of both. Other researchers, too, have called out the process of researchers focusing on only their area to the

exclusion of other, even relevant, works (Montuori & Donnelly, 2016). Adding the additional research area of organizational culture—another complex topic—heightened the complexity of the overall study. And given the political landscape in the United States at the time the study was conducted, obtaining willing participants was challenging.

Despite the complexity, the study produced a great many insights. The stories of the participants deeply touched me. Their acumen about their own experiences, their ability to richly describe the challenges, obstacles, interactions with others, as well as the benefits and joys, was critical to the outcomes of this study. Though their countries of origin, home languages, immigration stories, and life experiences were different, the expression of their experiences had many overlapping areas and their verbal expression of these experiences provided a richness and depth to the study. Through these conversations and subsequent analysis, five theoretical propositions emerged which, when understood and practiced, can provide an environment more suitable for the overall creative output for the individual and, in turn, benefits the organization.

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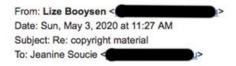
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Dr Lize AE Booysen
Graduate School of Leadership & Change, Antioch University

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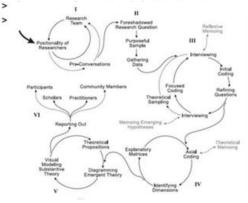
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Chapter: "Drawing from the Margins: Grounded Theory Research Design and EDI Studies"
Chapter Authors: Elizabeth Holloway & Harriet Schwartz
Figure: Figure 22.1 "Phases of Grounded Theory Research Process," Page 507 (screenshot attached of page and figure thereon).

Please see underneath, and advise.

Please stay safe.

Warmly

Lize

Dr. Lize (A.E) Booysen, (DBL) Professor of Organizational Behavior and Leadership
Graduate School of Leadership and Change, Antioch University, (USA)
Adjunct Faculty, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, NC, USA

███████████
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