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**Working Through Ideological Conflict: Utility of Authentic Leadership to Build
Community**

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

Masters of Arts in Organizational Leadership

St. Catherine University

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Abstract

Many people find it difficult to communicate across ideological differences, particularly if those differences are politically-charged. An abundance of research describes the differences between the two dominant political philosophies of the United States, liberalism and conservatism, but little research has been conducted on how to develop and maintain a community inclusive of these ideological differences. This qualitative research project gathered information from six self-identified leaders and 41 survey participants of varying ages, genders, political affiliations, races, and religions over the summer of 2021. Three categories of findings emerged: (a) how ideological differences make community-building challenging; (b) when and how people engage in ideological conflict; and (c) using skills and strategies to make ideological conflict constructive. Data analysis using Authentic Leadership Development Theory revealed that the characteristics of authentic leadership (“internalized regulatory processes, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and authentic behavior” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 322)) are well-suited to facilitate conflict dialogue involving ideological issues. In order to support one’s desire to live among and respond to differences, recommendations and implications are provided.

Introduction

During the year of 2020, two pandemics occurred and a highly turbulent U.S. Presidential Election took place. While they raged, the COVID-19 and racial equity pandemics fueled hateful political attitudes and speech towards both dominant political philosophies in the United States, liberalism and conservatism, during the U.S. Presidential Election. Voting citizens were forced to declare their loyalty to the ideals of one political philosophy or the other. This type of ideological conflict brings a person's values to light because their opinions on a topic often stem from what they believe to be right. As can be seen in recent years, this political divide in the United States has deepened to record levels and agreement or understanding on polarizing topics is hard fought, if it is found at all (Dimock & Wike, 2020).

Despite one's definition of community, all people are connected to each other in some form in society. I pursued this research because I believe it is important to recognize differences and to dialogue about any ideological conflicts before they spiral into hatred and fear. This thesis attempts to offer guidance on how ordinary people can build and maintain a community inclusive of ideological differences. If a true community cannot withstand and embrace differences, then conflict arises. During that conflict, if people were to apply the principles of authentic leadership, understanding between each other can result and the community can be stronger.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to uncover how ordinary people can help others and themselves develop and maintain a community inclusive of ideological differences. There is vast research on community, political philosophy, and ideological differences, but little research has been conducted to examine how the principles of authentic leadership might help community members accept differences and build community with those they may not understand. Studies

show that ideological differences, particularly if they are politically-motivated, cause strong conflict that often leads to negative emotions between participants and prevents community-building (for example, see Cohen, Pliskin, & Halperin, 2019; Ruisch & Stern, 2020; and Parker, 2015). As United States society navigates the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial inequities that plague workplace, educational, and community systems, I believe that it is more important than ever that we learn to understand and accept difference for its benefits rather than the fear it seems to instill. This study addresses a gap in current literature around community-building through ideological differences.

As a resident of Minnesota during the time of COVID-19 and racial unrest, and as someone with political leanings from both political philosophies, it was challenging for me to find a concept that would help my community connect with each other across differences. In Minnesota, there were strong feelings of inequitable treatment that sprang to the forefront of news outlets after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May, 2020. Across the United States and globally, people protested racial inequality and police brutality against the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community. Because of the murder of George Floyd, Minneapolis and St. Paul's response and reaction was heavily scrutinized by the global community. This further divided the nation and led to civil unrest. This unrest led to counter protests and the actions of extremists causing destruction and death.

The two main political philosophies of the United States, liberalism and conservatism¹, have strongly opposing attitudes, values, and beliefs (Cohen et al., 2019). Cohen found that these values motivate their members and dictate how they behave in society and how that behavior

¹According to APA style, in which this paper is written, the terms liberal and conservative are only capitalized when they refer to a specific party name or its members. They are written in lowercase when they refer to a political philosophy.

contributes to the formation of in- and out-groups. Ideological differences between liberals and conservatives indicate various interpretations of people and situations based upon what someone believes to be right and wrong. Although the terms are closely linked, in this thesis, I will be using the terms liberal and conservative instead of Democrat and Republican because this study is focused on the ideological belief systems that people hold and not the parties themselves. I recognize that there is great variance in how individual Republicans and Democrats feel towards the actions and beliefs of their parties, but this study is focused on the generalized aspects of these two belief systems as documented by Cohen, et al. (2019). This generalized terminology does not differentiate between different internal subsets of the political parties such as Trumpism and Q-Anon. This study is limited to discussions around the ideological differences and how people view the world. It does not address violent expressions of those viewpoints, nor did I include people who perpetuated violence as a means to promote their worldview.

Reflexive Statement

My thesis was not always going to be about community-building through ideological differences. Indeed, my entire master's degree program was geared toward uncovering the difficulties of sending students to study abroad and how vital those experiences were to their futures. During the year 2020, things changed. I became more concerned with how people were treating each other and with the personal difficulties I faced in having political or ideological dialogues about equity with family. The global racial equity pandemic, combined with the turmoil of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election, spurred me to focus my thesis on breaking through these ideological barriers and highlighting some strategies to assist those who found themselves surrounded by difference, unsure of how to behave or respond, but wanting to grow and understand.

The questions I asked in my survey and in my interviews were questions that I wanted answered-not solely because I thought they would provide quality data for my study, but because they were questions that I was curious about on a personal level. I wanted to know how people defined ideological differences and community. I wanted to understand how the descriptions and origins were different for various demographics. I wanted to discover if I was alone in the difficulty I faced when attempting to hold civil discourse with those who held opposing viewpoints from me. If I was alone, I wanted to learn resolution or dialogue strategies to better my conversations with others. I wanted to understand how our upbringings, social circles, faith, political leanings, location, and media influenced how we perceived, and in some cases feared, difference. Though by no means all-inclusive, I believe my thesis helps to answer those questions.

I was raised in a conservative household which strictly adhered to the values of family, protection, security, love of country, sanctity, and reverence of elders and experience as defined by my parent's upbringing by Polish and Irish conservative Catholic parents. These values continue to empower me to this day and I feel peace when I know my family is safe and secure. In addition to my upbringing, during my undergraduate college years, I formed great attachment to other, more liberal, values as well: protection against and mitigation of global concerns, respect and acknowledgement about the importance of different experiences and opinions, excitement about other cultures and cultural traditions, and desire to raise up and better the lives of those less privileged than myself. With this background, I often feel like the ribbon tied to the center of a tug-of-war rope. Both political philosophies aim to pull me to their side and want me to declare that side as right. As I cling to values typical of both political philosophies, I prefer to stay in the middle; however, it is hard to do so when each side attempts to convince the other that

it is wrong. This is the quandary that propelled me to ask, “how do we find community with each other despite our ideological differences?”

My worldview is shaped by my personal experiences and my interactions with family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and unknown persons who happen to be in the same place as me when ideological conversations occur. In other words, my community shapes my interpretation of events based upon my past experiences and current setting. Through self-reflection, I came to understand that my interpretation of events is influenced by the conservative family values I grew up believing and the liberal family values I added later. Current events in Minnesota and the greater United States played a large factor in the direction I took my thesis. I drew conclusions about the data and saw examples in events involving racial and political tensions between people in my community. I attempted to mitigate this bias by quoting directly from the raw data and focusing on participant’s words and the lenses they presented in their answers. My interpretation of the findings confirmed a number of my values and views on how the world works, but also refuted some ideas I assumed would be true. In order to present a neutral analysis, I took the advice of one of my interview participants and listened to the narrative being spoken instead of adding one of my own.

I first learned about authentic leadership in St. Catherine University’s MAOL Professional and Organizational Ethics course when we discussed different leadership theories and ethics. I found this theory very relatable and personable to me because I believe that unless you know yourself, you cannot truly present your best self to others. Unless you know who you are and why you react in ways that you do, I believe it will be harder to accept people who have different opinions and experiences than you. I think developing authenticity and presenting your

authentic self to others will help them to accept you as you are and trust in your experience and knowledge.

Creswell and Creswell Báez (2021) state that “how we write is a reflection of our own interpretation based on the cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics we bring to research” (p. 234). I wrote my thesis to find answers to questions that prevented me from strengthening relationships with family. This motivation has undoubtedly led me to find correlations between those conservative and liberal values that strengthen me. I self-consciously made meaning out of survey and interview responses that *supported* my values, but it was my challenge to find more meaning out of the responses that *refuted* my values. I began with the assumption that there were different political opinions that would come into conflict and that people wanted to come together to find community through these differences but were unsure how to make it happen. Through in-depth interviews and attempted unbiased interpretations of survey data, I tried to connect the stories and viewpoints of a variety of backgrounds. Different frameworks, I am sure, would highlight alternative aspects through new lenses to be considered, but in the end, the theoretical framework I chose helped me explain the phenomenon between groups of people. To my readers, I hope you find answers of your own and learn strategies to help you understand the values of the other side of your political arguments so that you may grow in community with difference instead of fearing it.

Literature Review

Political ideological differences are strongly entrenched in United States communities, partially strengthened by fear of dissimilar values and beliefs (Cohen, Pliskin, & Halperin, 2019). When something contradicts commonly held beliefs, the common response for some is to defend what one feels is right against what is perceived as wrong (Cohen et al., 2019). I believe

that by developing and utilizing the qualities of authentic leadership, individuals have the potential to bridge the political ideological divide between the difference that is feared and the community that is desired. Authentic leadership teaches that by being critically self-aware and examining how one's life experiences inform their interaction with others, individuals are able to civilly participate in a dialogue of ideological conflict because they are able to understand various moral perspectives on values. The purpose of this study is to uncover how ordinary people can help others and themselves develop and maintain a community inclusive of ideological differences.

My research question asks "How can authentic leadership help develop and maintain community inclusive of political and/or ideological differences?" This section outlines current literature on how political philosophies and authentic leadership traits influence community-building and different approaches and reactions to conflict. It ends by identifying gaps in the literature as it relates to authentic leadership and community-building.

Political Philosophies Influence Community-Building

I use the terms "in-group" and "out-group" in this paper. A person's in-group can generally be understood as the people someone feels closest to, shares something in common with, or feels affiliated with on a personal or national level. This is also called a person's community. The out-group is anybody who does not fit within a person's description of their in-group (Waytz et al., 2019). In this thesis, I will be using the terms in-group and community interchangeably. Understanding community as a form of in-group is helpful because the formation of in- and out-groups is strengthened by people's lack of awareness and communication with those they perceive outside their group. This "lack of intergroup contact results in prejudice, bias, and an increasing rigidity of in- and out-group boundaries, which

become institutionalized over time” (Reimers, 2016, p. 440). The institutionalization of prejudices strengthens with time and perpetuates through generations unless it is addressed by those opposing each other.

It hardly warrants saying that liberals and conservatives differ greatly in their ideologies. Rightist ideology is frequently associated with blind patriotism, a form of national attachment characterized by unquestioning ingroup love, allegiance, and intolerance of criticism...On the other hand, liberalism is associated with greater tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, a stronger tendency to support structural change towards more social equality, and greater trust in people in general. (Cohen et al., 2019, p. 484)

Differences between the two main political philosophies in the United States undergird the dialogue between them about what is best for society. Conservatives prefer to assess information that empowers their *ingroup* and liberals tend to assess information that reduces the perceived threat from the *outgroup* (Cohen et al., 2019).

Each groups’ political values rarely coincide with the other and often cause intense conflict between members of the two groups. A recent example can be seen in how liberals and conservatives approach the topic of immigration in the United States. Liberals see the influx of immigrants as a benefit to the economy and the job market, whereas conservatives tend to view the influx of immigrants to the country as a threat to customary traditions and the well-being of citizens (Waytz, Iyer, Young, Haidt, and Graham, 2019). Similarly, in one of his addresses during his 2012 presidential campaign, Republican Senator Mitt Romney articulated these differences when he said, “President Obama promised to begin to slow the rise of the oceans and heal the planet. My promise is to help you and your family” (Waytz et al., 2019, p. 1). The difference seen here between ultimately protecting the out-group as well as the in-group or

solidifying the in-group's future can produce an abundance of conflicting interests. Further, conflict between the two political philosophies often has moral undertones. Ruisch and Stern (2020) found that "past research has shown that more ideologically extreme individuals tend to hold their political attitudes with greater moral conviction and feel that their political beliefs are superior to those of others" (p. 3).

Authentic Leadership Traits Influence Community-Building

This section provides information about the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection, openness of thought (which my interview participant later terms intellectual humility), definitions of community, how storytelling can explain people's experiences in a tangible way, and the importance of cultural intelligence. These topics, and authentic leadership in general, are important to understand how to find community through difference because they help people understand themselves and how they approach situations involving difference. These qualities help to overcome fear by accepting that they do not know or understand all perspectives and are open to learning and personal growth.

Self-awareness and Self-reflection

Authentic leadership tells us that in order to lead others through conflicts, one must first be critically self-aware of their own values, biases and perceptions of the world. Most definitions of self-awareness derive from Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss' (1975) key dimensions:

Sensitivity to inner feelings; recognition of one's positive and negative attributes; introspective behavior; tendency to picture or imagine oneself; awareness of one's physical appearance and presentation; and concern over the appraisal of others. From this emerged both a private self-consciousness (e.g., 'I reflect about myself a lot;), and public

self-consciousness (e.g., ‘I’m concerned about what others think of me’). (Rubens et al., 2018, p. 3)

Campos-Moreira et al. (2020) stated that “leaders must recognize and be critical of how their lenses may not be inclusive of the breadth and depth of a diverse society” (p. 412). A person brings their personal biases and ingrained perceptions of the world to every situation. Before coming to a situation with others who do not share their views, participants should be open to changing their minds after hearing the other side’s argument. Only by doing this can someone “connect with other people who are operating with alternative paradigms, with different mental models, and with certain assumptions and beliefs about how the world works” (Castelli, 2016, p. 226). This is especially true in the case of political conflict dialogue.

Lawrence et al. (2018) also found that self-awareness is critical to develop because if you are not aware of how your biases and perceptions are affecting others, your effect can be negative. If the effect is negative, trust in the civility of the dialogue diminishes and can seem ingenuous and hurtful. Self-awareness also helps individuals adapt to change because it highlights one’s emotional response and their ability to assess themselves in situations (Rubens et al., 2018). Rubens et al. (2018) described Emotional Intelligence (EQ) as “the capacity for a person to demonstrate the competencies that constitute self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills, at appropriate times and ways and in sufficient frequency to be effective in the situation” so that they can develop goals, build the necessary relationships, and promote emotional and intellectual growth (Rubens et al., 2018, p. 4; Butler et al., 2014; Castelli, 2016). Cohen et al. (2019) seems to use this description of EQ as a basis to describe why EQ is so important in the formation of in- and out-groups. She stated that “individuals experience emotions in response to events affecting members of their (in) group, even without being directly

involved themselves” (Cohen et al., 2019, p. 482). Emotional Intelligence is especially important in relationship- or community-building between liberals and conservatives whose values and beliefs differ, especially as it pertains to the differences in perceptions toward the in-group (Cohen et al., 2019).

One other leadership style often employed in authentic leadership is that of reflective leadership. Reflection is important in ideological conflict dialogue because a person must have the ability to reflect on how their behavior affects a situation. Castelli (2016) defines reflective leadership as “the consistent practice of reflection, which involves conscious awareness of behaviours, situations and consequences with the goal of improving organizational performance” (p. 217). Reflection before, during, and after interactions that involve conflict or alternate viewpoints helps to make sense of those interactions. If someone is able to reflect on themselves beforehand, and about the situation afterwards, they are better suited to have difficult dialogues because they understand that not everybody thinks the same way and they “understand, value and trust their internal thought processes” (Castelli, 2016, p. 218).

Reflection and Clarification on Values

Reflection allows someone to take a situation in which they participated and think about how they acted, the reasons behind those actions, and what they could do differently in the future (Castelli, 2016). In politically-charged situations in particular, people are naturally headstrong about what their values teach them is right and wrong (Castelli, 2016). Reflection teaches that mutual understanding and acceptance of different viewpoints and values are not to be feared. Sharing experiences and reflecting on where passions originate will help to bridge ideological conflict to find community with those of differing perspectives (Castelli, 2016). Castelli stated that “reflection also promotes clarity with respect to one’s values, identity, emotions, motives

and goals and leads to improved thinking, information collection, goal setting and visualization of success with enhanced leadership behaviour and results” (pp. 217-218). Part of clarifying one’s values, identity, emotions, motives and goals is to perform a deep delve into self-awareness.

Critical self-analysis helps someone to clarify their position in emotionally-charged situations and explain the reasoning behind their viewpoints. If they are able to do this, it is possible their credibility in the conflict increases because they have done the background study to support their position. They are able to assess their position strength as well as their personal weaknesses upon which they could improve. Coming to a politically-charged argument having done this, helps to clarify values and pacify emotions. People react to situations differently and understanding that helps a person to argue credibly instead of arguing through uncontrolled anger. Regardless of how people come to a politically-charged situation, trust and non-threatening dialogues are necessary to building relationships.

Intellectual Humility

When conflict dialogue participants are not open to changing their minds, the pattern of fight-or-flight attitudes continually perpetuates with the same outcomes (Castelli, 2016). Taking this humble approach of realizing there are alternate viewpoints means “having a grounded view of oneself and others...(which) enables humble individuals to acknowledge their personal strengths and weaknesses (as well as those of others) without fostering feelings of superiority or inferiority” (Rego et al., 2017, p. 641). Bringing others into the conversation, and allowing them to voice their viewpoints so they feel as if their opinions are valued, whether or not they are the same as everyone’s, is an important aspect of finding commonality between conflicting parties. Rego et al. (2017) discusses three behavioral dimensions of leader-expressed humility that assist

leaders in bringing alternate viewpoints to the discussion: “(1) admitting mistakes and limitations, (2) spotlighting team members’ strengths and deflecting praise to others, and (3) being teachable” (p. 640). Ordinary people can utilize these dimensions when no formal leader is present; in doing so, the conflict dialogue can be more civilized, greater understanding can be reached, and cohesion between potential out-groups can be found.

Humility and authentic leadership share commonalities, but also important distinctions. Even though it is advisable for those exhibiting authentic leadership to be humble to the fact that they will make mistakes in cross-ideological situations, authentic leadership (AL) “is rooted in self-clarification and genuine self-expression, while humility is rooted in self-transcendence (and does not capture the) internalized moral perspective” (Rego et al., 2017, p. 642). With this in mind, humble leadership can be used to describe a part of authentic leadership (self-awareness) because “humble leadership uniquely captures self-awareness, acknowledgment of mistakes and limits, and the legitimization of uncertainty” (Rego et al., 2017, p. 641).

Community Defined

A person’s definition of community grows from both formal institutions such as schools, faith, and government and informal institutions such as a network of helpers and clubs within the community (Chavis & Lee, 2015). Regardless of the type of community in which someone finds themselves, everyone should be able to feel a sense of “trust, belonging, safety, and caring for each other...(and come) from shared experiences and (have) a sense of-not necessarily the actual experience of-shared history” (Chavis & Lee, 2015, p. 2). This sense of shared experiences, belonging, and trust resonates best with those whose values and morals most closely align with the individual’s.

Storytelling

One method of peacebuilding within a community using reflective and values-led practices is that of storytelling. It involves the “sharing of personal, biographical, traditional and historical stories as a way to develop greater understanding about the values, history, and traditions that motivate individual and group behavior and customs” (Linabary et al., 2017, p. 435). It can provide an element of humor and clarity to help diffuse tensions between ideologically-opposed participants. It is also a means of personally reflecting on one’s historical beliefs and attitudes and how those have affected their interactions with others. Storytelling helps to quell strong emotions as a means of understanding the cultural context in which people’s values and opinions originate. Parker (2015) and Linabary et al. (2017) agree that competing interests are connected to culturally shaped beliefs, fears, and values.

Cultural storytelling can be used “as a method for co-constructing meaning and encouraging dialogue that could lead to productive action toward social change...(It encourages) co-construction of meaning and transformation among community members, particularly in conflict situations and peacebuilding contexts” (Linabary et al., 2017, pp. 432-433). It allows for ideological dialogue in a less-threatening, sometimes humorous way that allows community members to interact with and understand those they might otherwise have avoided. For liberals and conservatives, this means being in the same room and discussing polarizing topics with those who hold opposing values. Linabary’s et al. (2017) findings suggest that storytelling allows participants to reflect on their own character and possible historical complicity in conflict situations. Storytelling humanizes those who were once considered “the other” and it demystifies and makes real their experiences (Linabary et al., 2017).

Importance of Cultural Intelligence

Culturally-held beliefs are, by definition, specific to a particular culture. Understanding these cultural beliefs and their impact on how others react to situations requires a significant amount of cultural intelligence (CQ). Rockstuhl et al. (2011) described this type of intelligence as “an individual’s capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity” (p. 827). Just as it is important to engage all parties equally in peacebuilding conflict situations, cultural intelligence helps individuals understand that others may not share their viewpoints because of their cultural upbringing. CQ is further broken into metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Individuals with “high metacognitive CQ are consciously aware of the cultural preferences and norms of different societies prior and during interactions” (Rockstuhl et al., 2011, p. 827). In contrast, cognitive CQ involves the “knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures acquired from education and personal experience” (Rockstuhl et al., 2011, p. 827). In other words, cognitive cultural intelligence allows people to “make connections between seemingly disparate pieces of information” and can “describe people and events in terms of many different characteristics” (Thomas & Inkson, 2017, p. 139).

Metacognitive cultural intelligence can more relate to the concept of mindfulness where the person is consciously aware of cultural differences, but is unsure how or why they know them.

Those who emerge as leaders must possess high cultural intelligence when engaging in ideological conflict between politically- and culturally-opposed parties (Rockstuhl, 2011). Rockstuhl et al. (2011) and Campos-Moreira et al. (2020) agree that the reason is because someone is more likely to develop trust between culturally-diverse participants and less likely to exclude viewpoints because these types of leaders take the time to “verify the accuracy of their cultural assumptions, consider their knowledge of other cultures, and hypothesize about possible values, biases, and expectations that may apply to intercultural interactions” (p. 828). The

importance of including all voices in the conflict dialogue, as Castelli (2016) reminds us, cannot be overstated. Without trust, community members may lose faith in the dialogue space and no longer feel comfortable expressing their views. Participant's self-awareness of the "impact of their own culture and background" and how "their own values may bias their assumptions" about other cultures should cause them "to pause and verify the accuracy of their cultural assumptions" before engaging in the dialogue to create the greatest impact for all involved (Rockstuhl et al., 2011, p. 828). To reinforce the importance of engaging all community members, Commons et al. (2006) declares that in order to be successful, emerging leaders must expose themselves "to meaningful contact with persons whose cultural views are known or perceived to be different from their own" so all are included, feel valued, and alternate viewpoints can be considered (p. 248).

Approaches and Reactions to Conflict

When someone does not share the same views as another, it is natural to withdraw and defend their values as correct. However, it is when one group chooses to fight to defend their opinions as correct without listening to other viewpoints, and has an attitude of always needing to win the argument, that intergroup conflicts arise (Cohen et al., 2019). As mentioned earlier, when one person or group instantly jumps to defense instead of interacting with others who have alternate viewpoints, their prejudices and biases towards that group are only bound to increase (Reimers, 2016). It then stands to reason that "bringing together members of conflicting groups reduces intergroup prejudice and hostility by allowing the parties to discover their commonalities and reducing or deconstructing their negative stereotypes of each other" (Reimers, 2016, p. 440).

Reimers (2016) stated that in order to begin and build relationships, society needs to address these ideological differences on a structural level and not just between individuals (p.

444). This is challenging because of confirmation bias and cognitive dissonance. These concepts explain that “people seek information consistent with their preexisting views, while avoiding inconsistent information” (Cohen et al., 2019, p. 484). Cognitive dissonance springs out of fear of the unknown and in response to “when one perceives threat or danger to oneself or one’s (in) group” whether directly involved in the situation or not (Cohen et al., 2019, p. 482). Fear makes people reiterate their preexisting beliefs with those who share them because not doing so invites uncertainty and inconsistency. In the political realm, fear “can lead to mistrust, de-legitimization of the outgroup, and a collective freezing of beliefs concerning ways of coping with danger” (Cohen et al., 2019, p 483). This is important because ingroup-empowerment is a characteristic most commonly seen in conservatives that aims to protect and promote the interests of one’s ingroup rather than attempting to quell the fear they feel about anybody in their perceived outgroup, a view consistent with liberal philosophy.

A typical response to conflict is to avoid it. According to Parker (2015), this is the wrong solution when trying to build community between those of opposing values. She stated that conflict avoidance does not allow for rebuilding and strengthening relationships in communities. Bringing opposing parties together (peacebuilding) rather than settling each side separately (peacekeeping) helps to bridge differences and find solutions that work for all, while at the same time, working to undermine stereotypes and biases both political philosophies hold against each other. Bringing all parties together also ensures that everyone has a voice in the dialogue and that their opinions are valued. The focus then should not be on individual conflict resolution, but solving it at the community level (Parker, 2015). Conflict resolution is complex and it takes time. Reimers (2016) encourages participants to stay engaged in conflict, even and especially if it

seems uncomfortable and resolution is unlikely because doing so encourages community-wide participation and understanding.

Gaps in Literature

The literature is extensive across the topics of bringing people together to discuss conflict, ideological difference, and authentic leadership. However, there is precious little research done on how authentic leadership can be used to find community through difference. The various components of authentic leadership (self-awareness and self-reflection, intellectual humility, storytelling, and cultural intelligence) are studied extensively for how they help people grow as individuals before they engage in these dialogues. Self-awareness and reflection on one's values are proclaimed to assist people in conflict situations to understand alternate viewpoints of ideologically-opposed individuals.

I explored how authentic leadership is used in ideological conflict to find community through difference in this study's broad survey and interviews with leaders. To clarify, this study did not examine what to do when community members refuse to participate in community-building dialogue about difference, but instead, focused on how people can develop and maintain a community inclusive of political ideological differences when they desire.

Theoretical Framework

For my study, I use Authentic Leadership Development Theory as described by Northouse (2016) and Avolio and Gardner (2005). Northouse (2016) stated that authentic leadership focuses on the leader's self-knowledge and self-awareness. He stated that the meaning a leader attaches to their life experiences is critical to how they participate civilly in community-building through ideological differences. Avolio and Gardner (2005) first describe Authentic Leadership Development Theory in their article *Authentic leadership development:*

Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. This section discusses Avolio and Gardner's (2005) theory as a framework for this study and how it can be used to understand how ordinary people can use the components of Authentic Leadership Development Theory to find community through ideological difference.

Foundations and Definitions

Authentic Leadership Development (ALD) Theory is relatively new to the field of leadership studies, but Avolio and Gardner (2005) argue that it is the basis that feeds many other positive leadership theories. Positive leadership theories like authentic leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and charismatic leadership are often described as a process or concept relating to recognizing achievements, understanding motivations, focusing on things going well rather than badly, and emphasizing inspiring aspects of people and organizations (Silvia Malinga, Stander, & Nell, 2019). Avolio and Gardner (2005) describe authentic leadership as a process that involves in-depth self-awareness and self-regulated behaviors that foster positive self-development for both leaders and followers. They describe how the four components of their theory ("internalized regulatory processes, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and authentic behavior" p. 322) differ from other positive leadership theories (see Appendix E).

Internalized regulatory processes, as defined by Gardner and Karam (2021), detail the importance of self-awareness and self-development of one's personal strengths and weaknesses and that person's ability to articulate these values to others. Avolio and Gardner (2005) state that the characteristics of confidence, optimism, hope and resiliency when combined with certain contexts and challenges can increase self-awareness and self-development. Gardner and Karam (2021) said that balanced processing of information enables leaders and followers to actively

listen to each other's viewpoints in a non-defensive manner, thereby increasing the prospects for achieving common ground. Relational transparency is an important aspect of authentic leadership because it means being able to articulate your strengths and weaknesses openly and honestly with *others*, allowing for the open exchange of ideas, and being transparent about how and why decisions are being made (Gardner & Karam, 2021). Exhibiting authentic behavior means using a combination of self-awareness, active listening to other viewpoints in a non-defensive manner, and communicating openly and honestly with others about your strengths and weaknesses while staying true to oneself (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Gardner and Karam (2021) also describe this as having an internalized moral perspective. By this, they mean that a person exhibits the ethical obligation to bring people together to hear all viewpoints and to be humble to and respect the fact that multiple viewpoints exist.

Importance of Self-Awareness and Reciprocity to ALD Theory

One of the cruxes of Avolio and Gardner's (2005) argument is that authentic leadership requires a high degree of self-awareness. They describe self-awareness as an "emerging process where one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires" (p. 324). They state that awareness of one's values, identity, emotional control and motivations are particularly important to the development of authentic leadership. Part of self-awareness is the ability to regulate one's thoughts and emotions when confronted with conflict, thereby making one's authentic self transparent to others. Gardner and Karam (2021) state that these concepts of self-awareness give someone the ability to express their authentic self, but also recognize and accept that they will sometimes fail.

One other concept presented by Avolio and Gardner (2005) to explain how authentic leaders influence followers is through positive social exchanges. In summary, social exchange

theory relies on the concepts of reciprocity and value congruence to help leaders and followers understand other perspectives through unbiased (balanced) processing of information. If people can listen to other viewpoints and exchange dialogue in a non-defensive manner, then these reciprocal relationships present greater authenticity on all sides of an issue and promote well-being during conflict (p. 326).

Importance of Authentic Leaders

Avolio and Gardner (2005) define authentic leaders as “anchored by their own deep sense of self; they know where they stand on important issues, values and beliefs” (p. 329). This is only accomplished through deep self-reflection and self-awareness of their values, principles, and ethics and shown to others through interpersonal interactions. Authentic leaders know who they are and believe strongly that positive outcomes can occur and sustainable growth can happen at individual, team, and organizational levels. Important to note is that authentic leaders also recognize that they have weaknesses, which they compensate for by surrounding themselves with others more knowledgeable (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Karam, Alvesson, & Einola, 2021). Authentic leaders inspire others to find meaning and connection by reflecting on their values and motivations, building confidence through transparency and trust, and fostering inclusive and ethical environments (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Although authenticity involves being true to oneself, authentic leadership shifts attention to the leader’s relationships with others.

Method

This thesis sought to answer the research question: how can authentic leadership help develop and maintain a community inclusive of political and/or ideological differences? In order to answer this, I chose to distribute a survey broadly using my personal Facebook, LinkedIn and

workplace networks. I then conducted six interviews with volunteers from my survey who self-identified as a leader in their workplace or personal communities.

Creswell and Creswell Báez (2021) state that “qualitative research requires that people approach research from a perspective that may be different than what they have previously learned” (p. 3). I chose to do qualitative research instead of quantitative research because I wanted the participant’s perspective and experiences to guide the variables and themes from their responses to semi-structured, open-ended questions that allowed “the participant to identify the relevant factors and thus allowing the (variables and themes) to *emerge*” (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021, p. 16). Although my thesis features Authentic Leadership Development Theory, I did not collect my data to explain it, as quantitative research stated. I instead collected my data then selected my theory based upon the results of my analysis, as the “**inductive** process” of qualitative research indicates (Creswell & Creswell Báez, 2021, p. 17).

I chose to conduct an unrestricted survey to reach the broadest range of people. By unrestricted, I mean that I did not limit participation to certain groups of people, but instead distributed it widely without instructions as to who could complete it, beyond stating that they needed to be at least 18 years old. I was using my personal networks, which primarily consist of a certain demographic (white, Christian, liberal, education professionals), so I thought opening it broadly would give me the greatest chance of diversity among my respondents.

Complete survey participant demographics are listed in Table 1. Although marketing messaging (see Appendix A) was directed toward a wide population on Facebook and LinkedIn, it is important to note that I distributed messaging using my personal social media channels. I also used targeted email marketing to my personal and professional networks. O’Leary (2017) would call this type of marketing “convenience sampling.” I used this type of sampling in order to

obtain the greatest number of participants in the shortest amount of time. Still, the respondent pool was limited in terms of the demographic groups represented, and the results of this study need to be viewed through the lens.

To identify interview participants, the last question on the survey asked if the respondent would be willing to have a follow-up interview with me if they considered themselves a leader in their personal or workplace community. I wanted to leave it up to the respondent and their interpretation of what a leader was because few people classify leadership the same way and I did not want to restrict their views of themselves. I received six volunteers who self-identified as leaders and offered to participate in an interview, and an additional person volunteered through email. I wanted to conduct six interviews with leaders in addition to my broad survey because I thought it would provide another perspective from those who self-identified as leaders in their organizations and communities when it came to engaging in conflict dialogue.

Participant Selection

There were two types of participants in this study. The first were respondents who completed an anonymous survey. They were recruited using Facebook and LinkedIn marketing, and a subset were targeted using my workplace and personal email lists. Forty-one participants took the survey. Survey participant demographics are described in Table 1 and encompass a wide range of ages, religions, political affiliations, and work industries, but were limited in diversity of races and state of residence. Three genders were represented, though women were more prominent than men, and there were two non-binary individuals. As the survey was anonymous, I use the terms survey participant and survey respondent interchangeably in the findings section to refer to the source(s) of data from the survey.

TABLE 1: Survey Participant Demographics

<u>Identifier</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Race	36	
Caucasian/White	32	88.89
African American	1	2.78
LatinX/Hispanic	1	2.78
Asian American	1	2.78
Other-Asian	1	2.78
Gender	35	
Male	10	28.57
Female	23	65.71
Non-Binary	2	5.71
Age	35	
18-30 years old	7	20
30-40 years old	9	25.71
40-50 years old	7	20
50-60 years old	6	17.14
60-70 years old	6	17.14
Religion	34	
Christian	20	58.82
Athiest	3	8.82
Prefer Not to Answer	3	8.82
Agnostic	3	8.82
Athiest Witch	1	2.94
No idea	1	2.94
Multiple Religions	1	2.94
Stoicism	1	2.94
Political Affiliation	35	
Very Liberal/Democrat	7	20
Liberal/Democrat	13	37.14
Moderate	2	5.71
Conservative/Republican	7	20
Prefer Not to Answer	3	8.57
Other	3	8.57
Current Work Industry	41	
Nonprofit/NGO	7	17.07
For Profit	5	12.2
Education	20	48.78
Self-employed	4	9.76
Prefer Not to Answer	1	2.44
Other	1	2.44
Other-Retired	1	2.44
Other-Healthcare	1	2.44
Other-Student	1	2.44

State of Residence	35	
Minnesota	31	88.57
Wisconsin	2	5.71
Other-Texas	1	2.86
Prefer Not to Answer	1	2.86

The second type of study participants were self-described leaders in their workplace or personal community, who participated in an interview. Again, these terms were left broad and open to the interpretation of the participant. Seven interviews were conducted, but only data from six interviews were used due to a recording mishap (see data collection section for further details). All seven interviews were recruited from the survey and all seven participants worked in higher education. The interview participant demographics can be seen in Table 2. Note that in the findings section, data from these participants are attributed to them by using their pseudonym when citing them.

Table 2: Interview Participant Demographics

<u>Name (Pseudonym) of Interviewee</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Political Affiliation</u>	<u>Current Work Industry</u>	<u>State of Residence</u>
Matty	African American	Male	30-40 years old	Prefer not to answer	Prefer not to answer	Education	Prefer not to answer
Malcolm	LatinX or Hispanic	Male	50-60 years old	Christian	Moderate	Education	Minnesota
Bess	Caucasian/ White	Female	50-60 years old	Agnostic	Very Liberal/ Democrat	Education	Minnesota
Inara	Caucasian/ White	Non-Binary	18-30 years old	Christian	Very Liberal/ Democrat	Education	Minnesota

Verna	Caucasian/ White	Female	40-50 years old	Christian	Liberal/De mocrat	Education	Minnesota
Gabriel	Caucasian/ White	Male	40-50 or 50- 60 years old	Unknown	Unknown	Education	Minnesota

Again, it should be noted that because the participants were recruited exclusively from my personal network, there are significant limitations in terms of the demographic distribution of participants. The results of the study must be considered with this in mind.

Data Collection

I conducted a broad survey and targeted interviews for this research. My goal was to have 30-50 respondents for my survey and six interviews with personal or workplace community leaders. I ended my data collection with 41 survey respondents who completed and submitted the entire survey and seven interviews with leaders. Because of restrictions with the COVID-19 pandemic, all of my interviews were conducted over Zoom. Conducting my interviews over Zoom proved beneficial because it was easier to schedule them and safer to conduct them. In order to obtain six complete interviews, I conducted seven interviews because the recording equipment failed for one interview. This loss of data presented no threat to the participant because there was no record of the interview. I conducted my interviews after my survey concluded, but I analyzed my interview data before my survey data because the amount of qualitative responses provided a better sense of themes throughout the data that was then supported by more statistical quantitative data.

I conducted my research between May and July 2021, roughly a year after the COVID-19 pandemic began and after a tumultuous year in Minnesota because of race and equity protests and rioting. It should be noted that at this time, Minnesota was loosening COVID restrictions and

was still in a racially-charged environment because the trial of Derek Chauvin, the police officer who murdered George Floyd, had just concluded and he was convicted of the crime. Tensions on both matters were high because both were politically-charged and ideologically divided. My data collection, and interpretation of that data, occurred as the majority of my participants were living through these circumstances. My interview participants encountered many evolving safety developments at work that required a high degree of flexibility and awareness. Those who worked at one college also went through strategic planning to move the college toward anti-racist policies. Most of my survey participants live in the Twin Cities, and so were continually bombarded with images of racially-charged protests and riots described from the perspectives of both political philosophies.

Data Collection: Survey

I used the secure Qualtrics software program to distribute and analyze my survey. Recall that 41 people moved through the entire survey and submitted their responses at the end. Survey participants were asked a series of 19 questions that focused on the topics of ideological difference, community, leadership, ideological conflict, and demographic information. The survey questions can be viewed in Appendix C. The questions asked for a mixture of qualitative and quantitative answers. The survey took a maximum of 15 minutes to complete and was completely anonymous (except if the participant identified themselves by volunteering for an interview or to receive a copy of my thesis). No question was required and not every participant answered every question, so there is some variance in response totals for all questions. I list the response rate for each question of the survey in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Survey Question Response Rate

<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
------------------------	------------------------------

How do you define ideological differences?	36
I find it easy to have ideological dialogues with those who think differently than me. (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	38
How do you define community?	36
Does/should everybody define community the same? If unsure, please explain. (yes/no/unsure)	38
Who do you consider to be in your community? If other, please explain. (select all that apply)	Unknown*
Where do you feel you learned what your sense of community means? If other, please explain. (select all that apply)	Unknown*
What happens if someone does not fit into your description of community?	32
To what extent do you agree that leaders who lead through their values are well poised to guide others through ideological conflict? (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	37
It is important for leaders to reflect on their own values, and if those values are politically-motivated, before facilitating discussions about polarizing topics? (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	37
Ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) can work through conflict without a leader. (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	36
Please explain your decision to the previous question about ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) working through conflict without a leader.	31
Ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) should first reflect on their own values and beliefs before engaging in ideological conflict. (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)	37
Is conflict healthy? (Yes, no, unsure)	35
Does conflict need to be resolved? (Yes, no, unsure)	35
Please explain your choice to the previous question about whether or not conflict needs to be resolved.	32
Do you have any conflict resolution strategies? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	32
Choose the top three topics that are likely to cause the most ideological conflict. (select 3)	Unknown*
Which of the following are the most likely reasons for conflict among ideological differences? (select all that apply)	Unknown*
Demographic Information	
Race	36
Gender	35
Age	35
Religion	34

Political Affiliation	35
Current Work Industry	41
State of Residence	35
Would you like to receive a final copy of my thesis when it is completed? If yes, please provide your name and email address.	29
If you believe yourself to be a leader at your organization or in your personal community and would be willing to have a follow-up interview with me, please provide your name and contact information (phone, email).	29

*These questions do not have a response total because participants selected multiple responses, so there is no way to tell how many people answered these questions.

Data Collection: Interviews

I recruited all interview participants from my survey. These individuals responded to a question at the end of the survey asking if they would like to participate in an interview. I conducted interviews with all seven people who responded to this question. Each of the volunteers participated in a single 60-minute semi-structured interview conducted over Zoom after they read and signed a consent form. I used a semi-scripted interview approach with eight open-ended questions and follow-up questions (see Appendix B) to guide the discussion; if the conversation led in a new direction that proved valuable, we discussed those topics as well. We discussed the subjects of community, conflict, leadership, and societal attitudes that resulted from politically-charged topics. I de-identified the data prior to storage and I only referred to the participant by their initials in drafts of this thesis throughout the entire writing process. In this thesis paper, I changed the interview participant names to pseudonyms. I used Zoom's transcription services to obtain a printed copy of the interview transcripts and I used the online, secure software, dedoose.com, to code the interviews.

Data Analysis

In this study, I used the inductive qualitative data analysis process described by Creswell and Creswell Báez (2021). This process involves preparing the data for analysis, reading the

data, coding the data, identifying themes to present in the findings section of this paper, interpreting the data, then validating that data. The following sections detail how I used this process in this paper.

Prepare Data for Analysis

I began my interview analysis by transcribing my interview data using Zoom transcription software. I then read the transcription and removed the unnecessary information and small talk that was not related to the subject matter. I also removed all names or workplace institutions to maintain privacy and replaced them with pseudonyms. I formatted the remaining content into question and response format.

I used Qualtrics software to analyze my survey data. This software offers analysis tools, which I used to see how different demographics answered each question. The survey was anonymous unless the respondent identified themselves by volunteering for an interview or to receive a copy of my final thesis.

Reading the Data

For my interviews, I then read through each transcript at least three times to gain a sense of what was discussed and the flow of conversation leading into various topics. I made notes of possible codes and themes in the margins. I also made notes when I read something that corresponded to something one of my other interview respondents stated.

Once I closed the Qualtrics survey, I read through participant answers many times. I first read through the data in full, then applied various filters so that I could see how different demographics (race, age, gender, political affiliation) answered the questions. I also downloaded only the short answer questions and answers into a pdf format to keep on my password-protected computer for ease of analysis.

Code the Data

I used Dedoose online software to apply codes to my interview data. I read through each interview line by line and applied codes taken from the direct interview quotes. These codes seemed to correspond to one of five categories: community, authentic leadership, political affiliation, conflict management, and leader's role in ideological conflict dialogue. I combined these codes into these categories. I then downloaded all of these combined codes into five separate Excel documents, one for each category.

I did not apply codes to the quantitative answers in my survey using Qualtrics software because this is not a service that program offers. After I downloaded the short answer responses to a pdf format, I read through the complete short answers three times and applied the same codes I had used for my interview data to see where the survey answers matched the interview answers.

Identify Themes

I read through all data in these Excel documents and found that three main themes emerged, with numerous sub-themes further describing the main theme. These three main themes were: (a) how ideological differences make community-building challenging; (b) when and how people engage in ideological conflict; and (c) using skills and strategies to make ideological conflict constructive. I organized the codes according to the theme and sub-theme most related to the interview quote. The interview data also showed which participant said each coded bit. This process allowed me to see which codes were discussed most frequently.

Once I saw which codes were most common, I created three overarching findings: (a) how ideological differences make community-building challenging; (b) when and how people engage in ideological conflict; and (c) using skills and strategies to make ideological conflict

constructive. Once I had my main findings, I created sub-themes which each contained their own data bits related to the main finding. I considered how each finding related to my research question and theoretical framework. I detail these findings and sub-themes later in this paper.

Validate the Data

To strengthen the validity of my findings, I used different strategies to minimize researcher bias and reactivity. First, during my analysis, I used software programs as tools to assist me in coding the data and finding themes and patterns throughout. I used the direct participant quotations and phrases instead of interpreting what I believed they meant when applying codes to the data, thus reducing my personal bias from analysis. I used only the most popular codes to create my themes (those that had three or more data bits from different sources). Second, I worked with an experienced research adviser on this study who is familiar with my topic area. She reviewed my data analysis and findings and required many corrections and justifications to align each finding with my central line of argument. Third, I closely examined my positionality in relation to my topic, which is documented in the reflexive statement earlier in this paper; my Reflexive Statement explains my personal background and experiences that impacted how I interpreted the data. Lastly, I compared my research findings and sub-themed data bits to published literature on authentic leadership, community, and conflict resolution.

Women, white people, and those who identify as liberal are overrepresented in my participant population. As indicated in the data collection section, I believe this is because my survey was distributed to my personal network, which consisted strongly of this demographic. To compensate for these overrepresentations, I minimized any disaggregation of the data and instead watched the frequency of coded responses in total. It would be wise for future researchers

to vary the gender, race, and political affiliations of the participant pools in order to better discern how people from other demographics would respond.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board (IRB) in April, 2021 at the exempt level to use human subjects in research. I also took the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training on “Social and Behavioral Research” in February, 2021. All participation in the survey and interviews was voluntary and participants were told they could cease or not answer a question at any point during their participation. If they chose not to participate after agreeing to do so, no penalty was applied and they were thanked for their time. No compensation was promised or given, except the hope that participants would take the knowledge they gave and use it to think about their future interactions. All participants were informed of the time commitment and use of the data ahead of time and all interview participants signed a consent form (Appendix D). All survey data was anonymous (except if the participant self-identified by requesting a copy of my thesis or volunteering for an interview), all interview participants were de-identified by using pseudonyms and workplace names were removed. All raw data was stored on a password-protected computer or within password-protected research software (Qualtrics and Dedoose).

Findings

My data analysis revealed three main themes regarding how to build and maintain community through ideological differences. These three categories include *How Ideological Differences Make Community-Building Challenging*, *When and How People Engage in Ideological Conflict*, and *Using Skills and Strategies to Make Ideological Conflict Constructive*. Many sub-themes emerged within these main categories. In this section, I detail the three main

findings and their sub-findings, providing data from six interviews and forty-one survey responses to support the findings. Note that data from interview participants is attributed to them by pseudonym name in contrast to data from survey respondents who are referred to as survey respondents or survey participants, as described in the method section.

How Ideological Differences Make Community-Building Challenging

How Ideological Differences Make Community-Building Challenging refers to how the survey and interview participants defined ideological differences and how these ideological differences challenged people's efforts to build community. In order to define ideology, I borrow from Malcolm's interview, where he stated that

“an ideology properly understood is a worldview. It involved all kinds of cognitive shortcuts. We make assumptions about how the world works. We have a theory that approximates reality and we believe that that's really what's going on. It's a set of assumptions about causal relationships.”

I use this definition for ideology throughout the remainder of the paper. The data indicated that a person's ideology influences their perception of community because often, a person forms close bonds with those who think like them and have similar values as them. Additionally, as indicated earlier in the paper by Dimock and Wike (2020), United States society is currently very polarized and the two political philosophies carry starkly different views on many controversial topics.

While explaining their definitions of ideological differences, most survey participants included some reference to a belief or value system or a fundamental frame of reference. Gabriel equated this belief system to something taught by a person's political philosophy and the fact that they are “so beholden to an orthodoxy they have to maintain” if they claim allegiance to that philosophy. Verna suggested a person's one-sided belief or value system is created this way due

to people most commonly only associating with like-minded individuals and so they only had one frame of reference “because nobody’s challenging our belief system or asking us to do better than what we’ve deemed perfection.” In order to understand how ideological differences make community-building challenging, I first review *how participants defined ideological differences*, then describe *what makes ideological differences challenging*, and finally, I detail *how ideological differences threaten community-building*.

Different Definitions of Ideological Differences

Survey participants described ideological differences in three different ways: (a) in terms of values, ethics, and belief systems; (b) the way the world works; and (c) people’s views on consequential social topics. Many respondents described these differences as contrasting viewpoints to people belonging to different communities or political philosophies. While their definitions ranged from values to views on public topics, the most frequent description was that of “interpersonal differences in moral judgements when confronted with identical information.”

One respondent noted that ideological differences were “influenced not only by values, but also by surroundings and education.” They noted that these differences are most prominently unearthed when the person is asked why they believe something, forcing them to explain their reasoning and opinions. These opinions, indicated by two other survey respondents, can stem from a person’s political ethics about what is right or proper in life.

Similar to those who viewed ideological differences as value system-motivated, other survey respondents indicated that these differences are various ways of believing how the world works. One respondent described them “as a mental framework, belief system, or set of guiding principles that differs from another persons’, noticeably in how a situation, circumstance, or problem is experienced and addressed.” Another person described them “as differences in

assumptions people make about the way the world works (or ought to work).” Another respondent was careful to note that the lens one person uses to explain the world is not the same as their own and so what that other person would consider an ideology, for this respondent, it was not so. A final person noted that “ideological differences are fundamentally opposing viewpoints on consequential topics discussed in public and private settings” such as abortion and gender identity.

What Makes Ideological Differences Challenging

The data revealed that ideological differences are challenging because people tend to avoid differences, United States society is very polarized, and there are many reasons that ideological conflict occurs. Further, participants described how people tend to avoid differences and only associate with like-minded individuals. Verna mentioned that when she only associates with family and friends who have similar thoughts as her, “I’m reinforcing (a stagnant mindset). It feels like we’re putting up walls to avoid that discourse” and not exploring the diversity of thought.

Throughout the data, participants described how United States society is currently very polarized and the two political philosophies carry starkly different views on many controversial topics. Interview participants discussed this dynamic throughout their comments, but Gabriel spoke about this dynamic most explicitly. He stated that embracing partisanship philosophy comes and goes throughout history and that “right now, I think we’re in a highly partisan moment where if you’re an elected official from either side, you’d think twice about ‘reaching across the aisle’ because the appearance of compromising with the other side is bad press.” Gabriel said it is perceived as a betrayal to the political party. Verna noted that the people who talk most vehemently about a political divide “are the voices of the very small, but vocal

minority on the two extremes” of the political spectrum-the socialist left and the radical right. Gabriel concurred that this is what leads to a knee-jerk reaction to claim “they’re wrong, they’re wrongheaded, they’re stupid, they don’t know what they’re doing, they’re brainwashed” because nobody asks themselves why the person thinks that. He stated that the political left and right loathe each other on principle.

Verna indicated that conflict occurs readily when people discuss any controversial topics. She stated that she would be more upset about something relating to her identity versus a disagreement about something material. Indeed, when I asked survey respondents the top three topics most likely to cause ideological conflict, 25.44% stated Politics, 18.42% stated Religion, 12.28% stated Race, and 10.53% stated Financial Distribution. Financial distribution referred to how government funds were distributed to the greater populous. These topics seem to reflect a person’s identity in large and impactful ways.

The data showed that some people are more comfortable than others in talking about controversial topics across opposing viewpoints. There are patterns in my data about who is most comfortable, based upon various aspects of identity, such as political affiliation, gender, and age. Out of 38 survey respondents, 52.64% stated that they either Agreed/Strongly Agreed that they found it easy to have ideological conversations with those who thought differently than they did as opposed to only 26.31% who stated they either Disagreed/Strongly Disagreed with that statement.

When I disaggregated the survey responses by political affiliation, Liberal/Very Liberal respondents stated Agree 45% and Disagree 35%, with 20% stating Neither Agree nor Disagree. By comparison, Conservative respondents were split evenly with 42.86% stating they Agree/Strongly Agree, 42.86% stated Disagree/Strongly Disagree, and 14.29% stated they

Neither Agreed nor Disagreed. Interestingly, those who identified as Moderate Agreed/Strongly Agreed 100% of the time, meaning they find it easy to have ideological conversations with those who think differently than they do. Male participants are more likely than female participants to find it easy to have these conversations, with 70% of men reporting agree/strongly agree compared to just 47.83% of women. Similarly, older people are more inclined to find ease in these conversations with 75% of 50-80 years olds agreeing/strongly agreeing compared to just 43.84% of 18-50 years olds who agreed/strongly agreed.

Based upon these statistics, the demographic who finds it easiest to have ideological conversations with those who hold differing views are Moderate, male, above 50 years old. The demographic who finds it most difficult to have these conversations, based on this data, are Conservative (by a narrow margin over Liberal/Very Liberal), female, and between 18-50 year olds. Notably, there is a narrow margin between Conservatives and Liberals/Very Liberals, and a definitive difference between younger and older people and males and females. Thus, the data shows that younger females across both political philosophies appear to be less comfortable and/or skilled at having ideological conversations with those who hold differing views. Again, these results must be seen within the limitations of the demographics of the study population, noting that the survey respondents predominantly consist of...

Ideological Differences Threaten Community-Building

The data suggest that finding community with others means having a relationship with them. Many survey participants noted that this relationship is stronger when the participants share something in common; one thing people often share when they are in community are ideological preferences. Survey participants indicated that the strength of the relationship between people determines their level of engagement in the conversation about ideological

differences. Participants deeply consider their relationship with others when considering whether or not to have a conversation about ideological differences. Inara stated that especially in their personal community, they felt they would not devote the energy required to bring somebody with opposite views into their community because Inara might not be willing to bend their beliefs. Bess stated that she would weigh the care she felt towards the other person so that both could grow from discussing ideological differences, however, if she had no relationship, she did not feel it would be worth the friction. Verna confirmed that if the relationship is strong, and both people can understand why something is important in the way it is to that person, then the disagreement can move towards mutual awareness. She stated that once this occurs, it becomes “really hard to hate a person. It’s really easy to hate an idea.”

Survey respondents described a pattern of avoiding those who thought differently than they did. Indeed, one stated that they “simply don’t discuss issues with people who are radically far off my views and ideals and may limit my interactions with them.” Another stated that they would not accept someone who believed opposite things about a topic. And yet, a few survey respondents stated that they would treat others cordially and with respect but would not interact socially. In all these ways, survey respondents described how ideological differences kept them from building community.

When and How People Engage in Ideological Conflict

When and How People Engage in Ideological Conflict describes how people in communities make decisions about whether and how to engage in conflict with others with whom they have ideological differences. Survey responses ranged from not wanting to engage in conflict because the respondent had no resolution strategies to always engaging in ideological conflict in order to educate another person, especially if it involved some component of the

person's identity. Again, according to the data, the strength of a person's relationship or with whom they chose to be in community influenced how strongly they chose to engage in the conflict. Most survey respondents stated that their definition of community had to do with sharing something in common. The data revealed one main theme: *To Engage or Not to Engage in Ideological Conflict*. Numerous sub-themes also presented themselves to support survey and interview participant's decisions on whether or not to engage in ideological conflict. I describe each of these sub-themes next.

To Engage or Not to Engage in Ideological Conflict

Numerous survey respondents described community as people having something in common. This could range anywhere from feeling connected or in fellowship with others to sharing a relationship with those whom you wish to maintain strong bonds. Although many described community in terms of sharing an identity or interest with others, two respondents had more nuanced definitions that highlighted the way they believe community demands commonality. One stated the importance of sharing "common norms and values, common resources, processes, institutions, and perhaps (though not necessarily) identities based on race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and/or politics" in order to maintain the relationship. Another described community as a purely social unit "it can be defined by geography, ideas, religion, customs, culture, identity." They emphasized that communities should be inclusive, but that they "can inadvertently draw a pretty thick line around themselves to the exclusion of others who don't share their identity" which they state is why community might not always be a positive term for everyone.

Unlike those who chose not to engage in conflict, there are many survey and interview respondents who felt conflict was vital to growth, even if people did not reach a conflict

resolution. Interestingly, however, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents felt that this could be done without the assistance of a formal leader. According to the 36 people who responded to this question on my survey, 83.34% of respondents either Agreed or Strongly Agreed that ordinary people can work through conflict without a leader. They stated that “ordinary people interact all of the time in this world and find solutions to common problems” and have to learn to work through conflict with others, but that having a formalized leader involved can force people to “pledge allegiance to a leader rather than having harder conversations about issues they may actually disagree on” with others and the leader would institute a power dynamic where there does not need to be one. Instead, many survey respondents agreed that having qualities such as an “open(ness) to compromise,” a willingness to “find ways to work through a conflict in order to accomplish goals together,” “talking and listening to other’s point of view” and later to “reflect on their situation” would help to resolve ideological conflict better than simply engaging a formal leader. Participants had a range of perspectives on whether to engage in conflict and why to do so, especially influenced by being in a workplace setting together. Numerous survey and interview respondents stressed the importance of healthy, constructive conflict that has a goal. I briefly describe these statements in the sub-sections that follow.

Perspectives on Why to Engage in Ideological Conflict. A key question that arose from the data was how participants decide whether to engage in conflict over ideological differences. Across the participants, there were a variety of perspectives on this. Among the 35 participants who responded to the question, 48.57% stated that conflict does *not* need to be resolved, 22.86% stated that conflict *should* be resolved, and 28.57% were *unsure* if conflict needed to be resolved. When asked to explain their answer, survey respondents specifically stated that “a conflict does

not need to be resolved if it's not harming the health or efficiency of the group," what the context of the conflict was, and how strongly the participants wanted to preserve the relationship. Two survey respondents discussed the desire not to harm others by resolving conflict. Indeed, stated one, it would not be worth the fight because resolving conflict could mean that someone won and someone lost. Another stated that the scale of the conflict is vital to knowing if a resolution should be found. They stated that a difference of opinion on liking one type of thing over another is very different than a conflict between nations in a war that causes harm and distress to others; in which case, "there needs to be a level of resolution to better the world and its people."

Being in a Workplace Together Influences How People Think about Conflict. To be in a workplace together, Matty stated, is to adopt "a shared professional sense or a professional lens is more of workplace values." People often choose to work at a company that aligns with their personal values because if you do not, Matty mentioned, "conflict with a basis in value differences can occur." He concluded by stating that if values align, people are able to compromise or at a minimum, work together cooperatively. Verna also commented that when people work together, despite ideological differences, "if it's something that we have to resolve, if it's one of the core tenets, we can't put that one aside." If conflict ensues, she said, it must be resolved so that tasks can be completed. Bess discussed what would happen if conflict was not resolved and hurt feelings were internalized and repressed. She stated if two people have strongly opposing views on a topic and refuse to voice concerns if a conflict were to arise, that animosity can manifest in other areas of work that may or may not have anything to do with the ideological conversation in which they refused to confront.

They Hope the Conflict will be Constructive. Among the 35 survey respondents who responded to the question, 71.43% felt that conflict was healthy, as opposed to the 2.86% who

felt it was not healthy, and the 25.71% who were unsure whether or not conflict was healthy.

This appears to indicate that people are unafraid to engage in conflict, so long as there is a good reason for it. Matty stated that especially in political conflict, discussing it is helpful because

It brings difference to the table, it brings diversity to the table. The diversity and the conversation and the perspective and the lived experience. It is also good to figure out how to move forward when you have two differences. The results of that means compromise and meet in the middle. Meeting in the middle is often a good thing, especially in politics.

Similar to Matty, one survey respondent stated that engaging in the discussion and understanding one another can and should lead to compromise where people can “think realistically about what I really need and what I’m willing to trade” to get it. Malcolm stated that compromise is hard to reach sometimes because people often sink their identity into their theories of the world. It would seem to that person then that if someone discusses an opposite viewpoint, that person is then attacking their identity instead of the idea or theory of the world. Instead, the other person can explain that they are not attacking the person’s identity, but the theory of how they view the world because, Malcolm stated, “all ideologies are theories, and they’re up for testing.” Inara stated that this can be helpful especially in cases where someone does not have the experience or knowledge of a group of individuals or a social movement. Having the conversation, they stated, “bring(s) these people up to speed” and helps to educate them on something they do not yet understand. Matty agreed when he concluded that if having this ideological conflict means that “we walk away from the conversation and are respectful of each other as a human, and lead that conversation, still respecting each other as humans” then the conversation was worth having.

Perspectives on Why Not to Engage in Ideological Conflict. Survey results revealed that some people saw themselves as more adept at dealing with ideological conflict than others. Indeed, some people choose not to engage at all to avoid tense situations where they have no experience or knowledge about how to cope or manage. Others choose to leave that community because they did not feel it was worth the effort to stay. Verna stated that in situations where the conflict has no impact on her life, she would “just walk away. It’s not worth the fight, it’s not worth forcing the discussion, the disruption.” If she knew for certain that the issue was important enough to her that the other person would not change her mind because she had embraced a strong viewpoint, she would simply leave that topic alone. Inara agreed that “I’m just going to not interact with these other people in my personal life because I don’t need to go through that if I don’t want to.” Alternatively, Inara stated, if they worked with someone, they both belonged to that work community, but they could choose to bypass the conversation in favor of being “cordial and needing to retain relationship with people in order to advance professionally.” A survey respondent voiced concern that if the other person did something that was strongly against their values of inclusion, they would not include them in communication. Survey and interview data indicated that for various reasons, not engaging in ideological conflict could be a viable choice.

Dangerous Not to Engage in the Conflict. Verna described the danger of not engaging in conflict or not having equal ideas about the goal of that conflict. She began by stating that “people have both the right, but also sometimes the obligation, to engage in their community to try to move things forward and not have things be stagnant.” Inara would agree that this obligation is especially prevalent in circumstances where incorrect information is being spread about a movement or a group of people. They stated that if the premise or goal of a movement is

misrepresented, then spreading that misinformation is damaging to the people involved in that community. Verna stated something similar when she commented that not listening to another person makes it difficult to see them as a person and not simply as the ideology they hold. She said that “if my only goal is to win at all costs, I’m going to run over everyone. It doesn’t matter. I have to win. But do I really win if I alienate myself?” She said it was more important to bring people closer together in communal understanding.

Using Skills and Strategies to Make Ideological Conflict Constructive

Using Skills and Strategies to Make Ideological Conflict Constructive means if people choose to engage in ideological conflict, they use self-awareness, intellectual humility, and listening, and strategies like equality/equity, education and storytelling to make the conflict constructive. Authentic leadership skills can help to clarify points of view, aid in understanding another perspective, and create a safe space where constructive goal-oriented conflict can occur. The data indicates that giving a strategy, sometimes referred to as ground rules, when engaging in ideological conflict aids in everybody feeling heard and valued for participating. What follows is a discussion of the *Skills* and *Strategies* that make ideological conflict constructive.

Skills

Survey and interview respondents described a number of skills that they used in building community in the face of ideological differences. They described how these skills helped them accept other viewpoints and understand other people’s experiences. These skills can be understood in three categories: self-awareness, intellectual humility, and listening.

Self-awareness and Intellectual Humility. Many of the participants spoke of being self-aware and having intellectual humility. By self-awareness, I mean a person’s acknowledgement of their own feelings, values, and needs. I use the term intellectual humility to refer to a person’s

recognition that their perspective may not be the only one and that it will always be limited to one's personal experiences. Matty stated that the first step to being a self-aware leader is to know yourself and what you want to accomplish. He said that "if you know who you are and what you want to accomplish, those characteristics of being a self-aware leader will be those that you embody (towards others). It doesn't deter you, it doesn't move you from your end goal." Matty stated that if one can "just challenge your own ideals (and think if) you are doing the right thing" then it makes them aware of what they bring into the space and the work that they do. Inara and Verna agreed that if you want to comment on something, you have to first think why you feel the desire to voice a thought to refute something "or is it just being snarky" stated Inara. Verna said that when she has unkind thoughts about someone who believes something different than she does, she has to pause and think about what impact their comment has on her life and why she cared to change their thoughts or opinions. Knowing why someone may comment on something helps them to understand how others perceive them and how they are presenting themselves to others. Inara and Verna stated that a person can think if their comment will lead the discussion somewhere or if they are just stating an opinion for the sole purpose of being heard.

One other aspect of self-awareness, commented on by Malcolm and a survey respondent, is that of intellectual humility. Intellectual humility, in essence, means accepting your knowledge limitations and acknowledging that your opinion is not the only one. The survey participant stated they were "always willing to admit when I am wrong" and to "see those I am in conflict with as equals." Malcolm stated the importance of having a sense of reflection and questioning in order to learn and grow. Bess stated that acknowledging that one perspective may not encompass all experiences, "should stop (you) judging other people or trying to convert anybody to whatever it is that you believe" because one person may not have all the answers."

Listening. Numerous interview and survey participants commented on the importance of listening to each other during ideological dialogue that involves different opinions. Matty stated that it is most important to “just listen. Not listen to respond, but just listen and be empathetic to the narrative of stories that are being shared. Be conscious of the judgment that we’re making about a person in their self-awareness.” Malcolm and Verna agree this is important. Malcolm stated that it is easy enough to get people to listen if you make it relevant to that person’s own self-interest, but to get that person to understand how it impacts you takes a higher level of skill. If you try to get someone to listen and understand your interests, Verna stated, you have to actually hear their voices if you ask for the person’s opinions. If you “ask opinions or ideas, and then ignore them, that’s worse than asking. It makes people feel dismissed.” Interview and survey participants also discussed the importance of having others listen to their ideas. Inara stated that using factual data is important to allow the other person to absorb and understand your point of view. One survey participant said that people are entitled to their own opinions “so long as they are able to fully discuss their perspective” even if the other person does not agree with it.

Strategies

Since there are many reasons ideological conflict occurs, there cannot be a single strategy on how to manage it. People handle conflict differently, but there are some strategies identified by survey and interview participants that they believe can make confronting ideological conflict easier. These strategies include equality/equity in the conversation, continued education and training to increase awareness and storytelling to help illustrate a perspective. I describe these strategies in the sections that follow.

Equality/Equity. Equality in conversation means that everybody gets the same representation and opportunity. Equity means to be fair and impartial. Verna and Matty agreed

that this is also imperative in ideological conflict. Verna stated that “bringing those groups together in a way that everybody feels like their voice is valued and equal” allows them to actively engage in dialogue that educates rather than humiliates. Matty commented that the conversation should be fair and everybody should get a chance to speak about their lived experiences. This balanced dialogue aids in a safe space to discuss controversial topics. He believed that everybody should be able to walk away from the dialogue with an element of respect for each other as humans. As one survey respondent believed, “it takes at least two to disagree and at least two to offer grace” in order for the conversation to happen peacefully.

Education/Training. To seek additional education or training on a topic in which one does not understand or have experience, Verna stated, is to have a growth mindset and a willingness to learn. As Inara mentioned earlier, it is challenging to have ideological conflict dialogue if someone does not have experience or knowledge about the topic. They stated that if “facts are stated and understood or at least explained” then people would have the background and information necessary to discuss that topic, they would be brought into the conversation instead of feeling alienated and uninformed. They postulated that “if somebody makes a mistake but really does want to be a good community member and learn, they are given the opportunity to do that rather than being ousted by the community.” If someone wanted to be a part of a community and learn, but did not know how to relate to those within that community, providing that person the opportunity would help them to grow. Inara said that if we assume that everybody has the same knowledge about a topic, it can lead to miscommunication and alienation. They stated that providing necessary background on a topic unfamiliar to that person opens the door to advanced learning and discussion.

A survey respondent continued Inara's line of argument by stating that someone "who has read and learned about conflict, ideological differences, or other topics like unconscious bias or anti-racism or being an ally or advocate may be able to check their own assumptions, listen openly, ask questions to better understand from a perspective of curiosity instead of critically." These behaviors support learning about the topic. As noted earlier, Matty described the importance of bringing lived experiences to an ideological conflict because it helps to contextualize it for others. Lived experience is a type of education, but if someone is missing that, then as Inara suggested, giving them that knowledge to bring forward to future discussions would help to serve the community.

Storytelling. Survey respondents noted that telling a personal narrative or having personal experience as background knowledge helps people come to the ideological conflict with equal perspectives. Just as Verna noted earlier, "it is hard to hate a person but it is easy to hate an idea." Bess noted that "by telling stories, it's very hard for people to dismiss something that happened to you or to someone else. I think stories are very powerful because they're about new situations, real people-it's a little harder to dismiss." Matty agreed that stories bring the conversation to life and if you do not have a story to share about something that happened to you, then you do not have personal experience with the topic and it becomes difficult to relate to or gain credibility with others. One survey respondent stated that storytelling allows others to experience the journey and can then empathize with the storyteller because their eyes were opened to a new way of seeing things.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study is to uncover how ordinary people can help others and themselves develop and maintain a community inclusive of ideological differences. Through six

self-identified leader interviews and 41 open-survey responses, three categories of findings emerged: (a) how ideological differences make community-building challenging; (b) when and how people engage in ideological conflict; and (c) using skills and strategies to make ideological conflict constructive. How ideological differences make community-building challenging provided definitions participants used to describe ideological differences, the challenges they faced when building community through these differences, and how these differences can threaten community-building. Definitions included descriptions around someone's worldview or value system; challenges included avoiding differences, dealing with a polarized United States society, and having many reasons for ideological conflict; threats included not sharing anything in common and having a shallow relationship with people of differing points of view.

When and how people engage in ideological conflict provided reasons participants gave to engage or not to engage in ideological conflict. Reasons to engage in conflict varied, but either related to a desire for healthy conflict with a goal that provided personal growth or if the participants worked together. Reasons not to engage in conflict were either given as not having conflict resolution strategies or the relationship between participants was not worth the effort of having the conversation. Participants also noted that not engaging in ideological conflict was dangerous when incorrect information was spread by a group or person unfamiliar with the topic matter. Lastly, using skills and strategies to make ideological conflict constructive explained various skills related to authentic leadership (self-awareness, intellectual humility, and listening) and conflict strategies (equality/equity, education, and storytelling) to make ideological conflict dialogue constructive. Participants noted that these skills helped them to accept other viewpoints and the strategies made confronting conflict easier.

Discussion

I began my thesis with the assumption that leaders were necessary to facilitate ideological conflict dialogue. As stated previously, the overwhelming majority (83.34%) of respondents believed that a formal leader was not necessary to facilitate this conversation. They stated that “ordinary people interact all of the time in this world and find solutions to common problems” and have to learn to work through conflict with others, but that having a formalized leader involved can force people to “pledge allegiance to a leader rather than having harder conversations about issues they may actually disagree on” with others and the leader would institute a power dynamic where it might not be necessary. Instead, many survey respondents agreed that having qualities such as an “open(ness) to compromise,” a willingness to “find ways to work through a conflict in order to accomplish goals together,” “talking and listening to other’s point of view” and later to “reflect on their situation” would help to resolve ideological conflict better than simply engaging a formal leader.

Avolio and Gardner’s (2005) Authentic Leadership Development (ALD) Theory helps to contextualize people’s experiences when involved in ideological conflict and how they can use these skills to build and maintain a community inclusive of differences. As discussed earlier, this theory uses a person’s experience and the meaning they attribute to it to explain how they approach interpersonal situations. It involves in-depth self-awareness of one’s values, identity, emotional control and motivations in order to present their authentic selves to others, but acknowledge that they will sometimes fail. Authentic leadership can have great potential when employed in ideological conflict dialogue to bring diversity to the table and allow everyone to voice their opinions, learn something new, and grow as humans. In this section, I use the four aspects of ALD Theory (*internalized regulatory processes, balanced processing of information,*

relational transparency, and *authentic behavior/internalized moral behavior*) to frame my findings.

Internalized Regulatory Processes

Recall that this component of ALD Theory discusses the importance of self-awareness of “one’s personal strengths, weaknesses, values, goals, motives and emotions” and a person’s ability to articulate such values to others (Gardner & Karam, 2021, p. 4). In this section, I use this aspect of ALD Theory to describe the importance of self-awareness of internal perceptions and bias and the importance of conveying these messages in the form of storytelling.

Self-awareness

The literature described how a person’s self-awareness regulates their actions during ideological conflict. Self-awareness helps people to clarify their values, identity, and emotions so that they can move towards understanding that same thing in others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Matty stated that knowing who you are as a person and what you want to accomplish will be evident in conflict situations and lend credibility to your argument. Having a strong self-awareness helps people adapt to change because they are able to assess themselves quicker and form a better argument to present in the conflict (Rubens et al., 2018). The data indicates that being able to convey these underlying responses helps others to understand your perspective and your story.

Campos-Moreira et al. (2020) and Lawrence et al. (2018) commented that even if someone has a strong sense of self-awareness, they should also understand that their “lenses may not be inclusive of the breadth and depth of a diverse society” (Campos-Moreira, 2020, p. 412). People should be aware of the biases and historical perceptions they hold that may affect others (Lawrence et al., 2018). Verna and Inara agree with the literature that to be aware of biases and

perceptions would help to increase a sense of trust in the validity of the argument and let other people understand that the person is trying to learn and does not proclaim to know everything about the ideological topic. In order for someone to grow, Malcolm believed that they have to have a strong sense of self and realize their own internal strengths and weaknesses so that they can rise to whatever challenge they face.

We saw this in the data when Inara described the difficulty they faced when having a dialogue about ideological differences with someone who had no experience with the topic. They stated that if someone really wanted to learn but was unaware how to act or discuss a topic, it would be important to bring that person into the conversation instead of condemning them for their ignorance. By providing that opportunity to someone, they said, it gives that person the background knowledge and confidence to have more conversations in the future. Matty said it was important to bring lived experiences to an ideological conflict in order to make the discussion real and experiential for everyone involved. Additionally, as one survey respondent noted, instances that involved topics like unconscious bias or anti-racism or being an ally, it would be even more helpful to have someone involved who has education and experience with the topic.

Storytelling

As stated by Linabary et al. (2017) previously, storytelling involves the “sharing of personal, biographical, traditional and historical stories” to help develop greater understanding “about the values, history, and traditions that motivate individual and group behavior and customs” (p. 435). Part of self-awareness, Lawrence (2018) described, is knowing who you are and where your own perception of events originates so that your effect is not negative. Castelli (2016) stated that understanding that this is part of upbringing and the personal experiences a

person has had over time helps them to understand why they are approaching a situation in that way. Castelli (2016) stated that “reflection also promotes clarity with respect to one's values, identity, emotions, motives and goals and leads to improved thinking, information collection, goal setting and visualization of success with enhanced leadership behaviour and results” (p. 217-218). Verna described how storytelling not only assists the storyteller, but also the listener who hears the spoken narrative because they can then understand what and who influenced the speaker’s point of view. By sharing a narrative, she stated, the listener can place themselves into the shoes of the speaker to see if they would have made the same decision or, based on their internal processing, they would have approached the situation differently. Gabriel and Verna stated that it is important in an ideological conflict to somehow humanize the other instead of treating them as an idea. Bess said this is best accomplished by telling stories because it is difficult to dismiss something that actually happened to someone.

Reciprocal listening and exchange of ideas and conveying one’s values to others helps understand other people’s perspectives (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Castelli (2016) stated this exchange of stories can lead listeners to information processing in a more unbiased or open way. This sharing of experiences and people’s internal reflections helps to empathize with other people’s stories and experiences (Castelli, 2016). This exchange of narratives helps to encourage dialogue that can lead to productive relationships (Linabary, 2016).

Balanced Processing of Information

This component of ALD Theory stated that people will be open to listening to others and processing information so that they can grow as people and make more informed decisions. This is, according to interview participants, made difficult by political motivations and personal bias. I

use this aspect of ALD Theory in relation to the formation of in- and out-groups and how accepting people are of alternative ideological perspectives.

Formation of In- and Out-Groups

As stated earlier, a person's in-group equates to a person's community because it is a place where they feel as if they belong (Waytz et al., 2019). This is often with like-minded individuals who share something in common. As multiple survey respondents stated, it can involve some aspect of a person's identity so that you can feel connected and maintain strong bonds. The out-group is perceived as anybody who does not fit into someone's definition of community (Waytz et al., 2019). People will often have an internal reaction to something affecting their in-group even if they are not involved. For example, Verna and Inara stated that they would be more upset when confronted with conflict against part of their identity rather than something as inconsequential as a favorite tea. Bess also commented that the strength of a relationship would depend on if and how she would engage in the conflict. When the ideological conflict is between two people in different out-groups, Waytz (2019) stated, it is more difficult to get them to listen to each other because, as Gabriel noted, they view the other group as wrong. It is more important in these situations then to explain stories and underlying perspectives in order for the other person to understand and respect a person's perspective.

Openness to Alternative Ideological Perspectives

If someone comes to a situation where they know other people do not share their views, it is helpful if they bring an open mind and are willing to either change their views or at least acknowledge the existence of an alternate paradigm (Castelli, 2016). If people do not come to the ideological conflict having done so, they are likely to alienate others who do not share their opinions. Matty and Inara both agreed that actually sitting down together to have the ideological

dialogue, even and especially if people do not agree, is more important to reduce the fear of difference people can experience when something affects their in-group ideals. Reimers (2016) agreed that bringing these groups together helps to eradicate intergroup prejudice, hostility, and stereotypes by allowing people to see how they are similar rather than focusing on how they are different.

Relational Transparency

Relational transparency facilitates an open exchange of ideas and exhibiting these qualities will “help those who are close to them see both their positive and negative qualities as a basis for establishing intimacy and trust, while encouraging others to do the same” (Gardner & Karam, 2021, p. 4). I use relational transparency to explain people’s different reactions to ideological conflict.

Reactions to Ideological Conflict

There are many reactions people have when conflicts arise; some are healthy, but others perpetuate fear of differences. As Verna stated earlier, “if I’m attacking you, it’s because I wanted to educate you and you really needed to know this. And if you’re attacking me it’s because you’re mean.” She said that having to win an argument for the sake of winning does not help to educate others if the person is unwilling to accept that they do not have the right perspective all the time. Castelli (2016) agrees that a person’s tendency for fight or flight reactions can produce the same outcomes because people do not give themselves the opportunity to learn something new about someone or a group of people.

Survey participants noted that ignoring conflict was a legitimate strategy. Reimers (2016), however, would disagree. She believed that staying engaged in the conflict, especially if it is uncomfortable and resolution is unlikely, encourages community-wide participation and

understanding because one is able to continue learning even when it is difficult. In this case, the learning is what is important and not the resolution of the conflict. As Inara stated earlier, “I feel like calling in, rather than calling out, helps to build community because...they are given the opportunity to (learn) rather than being ousted by the community.” Remember that 48.57% of survey participants noted that conflict resolution was not as necessary as listening to the narrative of others and understanding their perspective and lived experience.

Authentic Behavior/Internalized Moral Perspective

Those people who strive to establish higher levels of the first three components of ALD Theory (thereby increasing their authenticity) increase their ethical perspectives because they recognize that their behavior has consequences for others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Those people who possess a strong internalized moral perspective respect others’ experiences and opinions instead of immediately declaring them wrong because the perspective may be different than their own. The following section uses this aspect of ALD Theory to explain the importance of bringing people together to have a conversation about ideological differences, but also acknowledging that one person does not know all the answers or is aware of all perspectives.

Bringing People Together

Similar to Chavis and Lee (2015), Gabriel stated that when people enter communities, they should be made to feel welcome and safe and given the opportunity to have a sense of shared history with people in that community based on their past experiences. He said that people should be offered the chance to share these experiences in their conversations within the community so that mutual understanding can occur. Developing trust within the community is made easier by bringing together different perspectives and experiences, as Inara indicated in their discussion of movements. If people are allowed to share their stories with others, then they

feel more comfortable having these conversations in the future. When people are not made to feel welcome or respected, they will likely not voice their thoughts in the future, thereby perpetuating separation between community members.

Humility

Successful leaders are those who recognize that their views may not be as inclusive as they desire (Campos-Moreira et al., 2020). One person's views do not represent the breadth of societal views. Just as Malcolm believed that intellectual humility is important to successful dialogue, Rego et al. (2017) described having a grounded view of oneself as being able to acknowledge personal strengths and weaknesses in themselves and others without fostering ill feelings of one person being better or worse than another. Rego et al. (2017) mentioned that admitting personal mistakes and limitations and being teachable made conflict civilized and allowed for greater understanding between people of different out-groups. A survey participant noted that "it takes at least two to disagree and at least two to offer grace." People should not be made to feel stupid or foolish because they do not understand another person or group. They should be given the grace to learn. In this case, grace accepting that a person does not know the answer and that they should be given leeway for their ignorance.

Implications/Recommendations

The forty-one survey participants and six interview participants in my study revealed that different definitions of ideological differences and community exist. They all also noted that these differences have the potential to lead to serious ideological conflict. Even though each participant had their own way of dealing with conflict, participants, in general, agreed that bringing people together and discussing the issues allowed people to see each other as humans instead of only ideas. The literature shows that by using the principles of authentic leadership

(self-awareness, listening and storytelling), it becomes easier for people to explain their perspectives and have other people accept that the answer may not be simple or one-sided. If possible, my survey participants felt, conflict resolution is beneficial as long as it does not cause harm to either participant, but interview participants noted that the dialogue was more important to maintaining community. According to the data, if people engaged in conflict, they did so for a variety of reasons and desired outcomes. When conflict was intense, in either personal or professional communities, participants noted that people treated each other differently and more like outsiders.

Interview participants noted that self-reflection on personal values, biases, and experiences helped to understand the other person in an ideological conflict. However, if conflict went undeterred, several survey and interview participants noted that it would be poisonous to the relationship going forward because those feelings could manifest into something unrelated to the original conflict. If people chose to engage in conflict, they did so for a variety of reasons and with a variety of resolution strategies. Some of these strategies involved using the skills of authentic leadership (self-awareness, intellectual humility, and listening) and strategies like equality/equity, education, and storytelling to make the conflict constructive. Avolio and Gardner's (2005) Authentic Leadership Development Theory was vital in understanding these findings in relation to how people build and maintain community through ideological differences. In the following paragraphs, I detail the implications of this study for those looking for a way to build community with others who do not share their ideological views. In addition, I offer recommendations on how to begin this journey.

Ways to Build Community through Ideological Difference

This study identified how ideological differences make community-building challenging, when and how people engage in ideological conflict, and which skills and strategies people employ to make ideological conflict constructive. The data showed that individuals have their own descriptions of ideological differences and what makes up their community. These differences, participants stated, make forming a community challenging, especially when those differences spiral into conflict because people do not handle conflict the same, if they choose to handle it at all. If they do, many survey participants noted that they employ various skills and strategies to give the conflict a goal. The skills and strategies detailed in this study aid those interested in forming a community with people who hold opposing ideological viewpoints.

First, I recommend that those interested in seeking community through ideological difference engage in deep self-reflection and critical analysis of their current awareness, perceptions, influences, biases and conflict resolution strategies. Literature and this study's interview participants suggest that doing this self-awareness ahead of time will prepare one to readily have these conversations in the future and be prepared with a solid argument that details their perspective based upon their experiences. Honest and unbiased reflection upon oneself, Malcolm and Verna noted, helps them to understand what they do not know or have experience dealing with when it comes to ideological, often politically-charged, conflict.

In addition, my second recommendation is for those who want to personally grow in understanding other people, their experiences, and how those experiences shaped alternative perspectives, should seek out difference. I believe they can make it a point to unearth knowledge about a group or community of which they know little and engage in a discussion with them. I agree with Malcolm that there is so much turmoil and anger in today's United States society that educating oneself about others can only help to understand. Inara believed that by attaining

knowledge about a community to which one does not belong, it will help that person to overcome their fear of the unknown and opens themselves up to the possibility of new perspectives and broader definitions of controversial issues. One of the reasons interview participants in my study found it difficult to find community with others who did not share their views was because one or both of them were not willing to listen to the other in a respectful, open, and honest way. The data showed that they were not open to having their minds altered to include new perspectives about things of which they knew little.

My final recommendation comes from something Matty and a survey participant discussed. It is important that community members offer grace and listen to understand one another instead of listening to respond. Often, Matty said, people want to have their stories heard in a respectful and equitable way. People do not always require a response or an opinion. Sometimes, this survey participant noted, it is enough to simply acknowledge their experience and empathize with their point of view, even and especially if it is different from one's own. Their story is theirs alone, the same way someone's story belongs to them. I believe that everybody has their reasons for saying and acting the way they do. Offer grace to others when they make a mistake and allow them the opportunity to learn from other's knowledge.

Limitations

There are two major limitations in this research. First, the survey and interview participants were recruited through the researcher's personal networks; therefore, the participant demographics are limited by use of convenience sampling and are rather homogenous. My personal and professional network mostly consists of white, Christian, liberal, education professionals. Most of these education professionals worked at predominantly white institutions. I attempted to mitigate this limitation by conducting an open survey available to my greater

Facebook and LinkedIn networks; however, these networks also consisted of many personal and professional family, friends, and colleagues. The demographic similarities among my participants are a strong limitation in this study. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents were white, Christian, liberal/very liberal, education professionals who lived in Minnesota. Also of note is that my interview participants were drawn solely from the survey, so their identities also fall into this category; however, their demographic is slightly more heterogeneous.

Second, even though my participation objective was achieved with six interviews and 41 survey participants, this sampling is not large enough or generalized for the whole population, especially considering its homogeneous nature. A larger sample size has a greater possibility of including more conservative voices from a variety of locations and races. In my survey, I did not require responses to any of the questions. My decision to format the survey that way was an ethical choice, but it also guaranteed that not every respondent would answer every question, which was the case. Convenience sampling allowed for completion of this thesis, but broader sampling should be considered for future research because it would provide a more balanced selection of opinions and experiences.

Also of note is that most participants lived in Minnesota, which makes respondent's opinions fairly localized to the Midwest and possibly reflective of the cultural norms related to conflict in the Midwest among this demographic. I wish that I would have asked specific questions in my interviews and survey about what the individual did in certain situations they discussed. Instead, we mostly talked in generalized terms, which made my findings more general and less specific to what each participant encountered.

Conclusion

It is unrealistic to assume that one strategy for handling ideological conflict will build and maintain community. There is no one style of leadership that will produce the best results to conflict dialogue. However, if participants exhibit the qualities of authentic leadership, and allow grace for personal and interpersonal mistakes, and actively seek answers by asking tough questions, then they can more easily find a sense of community that is inclusive of ideological differences. By appealing to the values of both ideological political philosophies, and by being humble to their own biases, emerging authentic leaders and everyday people create an atmosphere of trust where all parties feel valued, respected, and can grow in community with others.

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Appendix A: Interview and Survey Recruitment Statements

Social Media Post

Hello FACEBOOK/LINKEDIN Network Members,

As part of my Master's in Organizational Leadership (MAOL) degree at St. Catherine University, I am completing a thesis titled "Leading Authentically to Help Develop and Maintain Community Inclusive of Political and/or Ideological Differences." I believe this is an important topic because we live in a polarized society where ideological differences divide us into "we" and "they." Dialogues are hard to conduct because of people's deeply held values and the fear many people experience when faced with difference. This study aims to provide a framework and ideas on how to push through this fear to find community with each other despite ideological differences.

If you are 18+ years old and reside in the United States of America, I am requesting your assistance to voluntarily complete a survey which will take you approximately 10-15 minutes. It asks questions about how you describe ideological difference, community, and leadership, what you feel are the greatest polarizing issues facing our communities and why, and how we can come together as a community to push through the fear people experience over difference. The link to my survey is **here**. It is completely anonymous unless you voluntarily provide your contact information at the end. I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete this survey when time allows, but no later than July 31, 2021. If you would also (or instead) like to have a semi-structured 60-minute interview with me regarding what leaders can do to assist others in this matter, please contact me via a personal message. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews will be conducted over Zoom.

Additionally, if you could pass along my request to your network, or if you have suggestions on who I could recruit for an interview, I would appreciate you passing along this information. I greatly appreciate you and the time you commit to helping me partially fulfill my master's degree.

Sub-post

TL:DR I am completing my thesis for my MAOL degree at St. Catherine University. I would appreciate it if you would voluntarily please take this 10-15 minute **survey** about my topic: "Leading Authentically to Help Develop and Maintain Community Inclusive of Political and/or Ideological Differences." You must be 18+ years old and reside in the United States of America.

Network Recruitment Email

Dear Name,

As you might recall, I am a graduate student in the Masters of Organizational Leadership (MAOL) program at St. Catherine University. The final product of my degree is a thesis, which I am currently completing. My thesis is titled “Leading Authentically to Help Develop and Maintain Community Inclusive of Political and/or Ideological Differences.” I believe this is an important topic because we live in a polarized society where ideological differences divide us into “we” and “they.” Dialogues are hard to conduct because of people’s deeply held values and the fear many people experience when faced with difference. This study aims to provide a framework and ideas on how to push through this fear to find community with each other despite ideological differences.

I am requesting your assistance to voluntarily complete a survey which will take you approximately 10-15 minutes. You must be 18+ and reside in the United States of America. The survey asks questions about how you describe ideological difference, community, and leadership, what you feel are the greatest polarizing issues facing our communities and why, and how we can come together as a community to push through the fear people experience over difference. I am hoping to recruit 30-50 people for my survey and 4-6 self-identified workplace or personal community leaders for a semi-structured interview. This survey and interview is completely voluntary and no fault or negative feelings will be reflected if you choose not to participate.

The link to my survey is **here**. It is completely anonymous unless you voluntarily provide your contact information at the end. I would greatly appreciate it if you would complete this survey when time allows, but no later than July 31, 2021. If you would also (or instead) like to have a semi-structured 60-minute interview with me regarding what leaders can do to assist others in this matter, please contact me at jjmcmurray@stkate.edu or my cell phone (651) 402-4050. The last question on the survey also asks this question and you can provide your contact information there as well. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews will be conducted over Zoom. Additionally, if you could pass along my request to your network, or if you have suggestions on who I could recruit for an interview, I would appreciate you passing along this information.

If you have any questions regarding my thesis, or would like to schedule an interview with me, please contact me at jjmcmurray@stkate.edu or (651) 402-4050. I greatly appreciate you and the time you commit to helping me partially fulfill my master’s degree.

Regards,
Jen McMurray

Appendix B: Interview Questions and Prompts

Background Information

1. Can you please describe your current professional occupation?
 - a. Industry? Position? Leadership?

Community

2. What differences, if any, do you see between workplace and personal communities?
 - a. If yes, what are they?
 - b. If no, why not?
3. How would you consider yourself a leader in your personal community outside of work? Why?

Conflict

4. What are your thoughts about ideological conflicts?
 - a. What influences these thoughts?
 - b. Do you have any professional or personal experience with ideological conflict? (co-workers, peers, family, community)
 - c. What are some strategies/solutions to navigate ideological conflict?
 - d. What are the main issues that cause ideological conflict?
5. What kind of training or intrapersonal development do you feel would be helpful for leaders in navigating ideological conflict?
 - a. Ordinary people without a facilitating leader?
6. In what ways can conflict be healthy or unhealthy? Why/why not?
7. What would a resolution to ideological conflict look like?
 - a. What would be the result if ideological conflict cannot be resolved?
 - b. As a community, if we become better at accepting the tension that comes from ideological differences, and actively engage in difficult dialogues to understand and advance our personal awareness, would this be considered a successful resolution?

Leadership

8. As a leader in your workplace and/or personal community, how are you uniquely positioned to help others find community with each other despite their ideological differences?
 - a. What skills or qualities or ways of leading do you possess that aids you in this community-building?
 - b. What are some ways to lead others through difference to find community? Why/why not?

Final Wrap-up Questions

9. Is there anything you feel that I have not asked that is important to this discussion?

Appendix C: Survey Questions

1. How do you define ideological differences?
2. I find it easy to have ideological dialogues with those who think differently than me.
(Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
3. How do you define community?
4. Does/should everybody define community the same? If unsure, please explain.
(yes/no/unsure)
5. Who do you consider to be in your community? If other, please explain. (select all that apply)
6. Where do you feel you learned what your sense of community means? If other, please explain. (select all that apply)
7. What happens if someone does not fit into your description of community?
8. Authentic leadership contends that “effective and authentic leaders are able to accept themselves for who they are and remain true to this sense of self when dealing with others...(they are) extremely aware of how they think and act as well as how others perceive these behaviors” (Butler, Kwantes, & Boglarsky, 2014, p. 88). To what extent do you agree that leaders who lead through their values are well poised to guide others through ideological conflict? (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
9. It is important for leaders to reflect on their own values, and if those values are politically-motivated, before facilitating discussions about polarizing topics? (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
10. Ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) can work through conflict without a leader.
(Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

11. Please explain your decision to the previous question about ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) working through conflict without a leader.
12. Ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) should first reflect on their own values and beliefs before engaging in ideological conflict. (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
13. Is conflict healthy? (Yes, no, unsure)
14. Does conflict need to be resolved? (Yes, no, unsure)
15. Please explain your choice to the previous question about whether or not conflict needs to be resolved.
16. Do you have any conflict resolution strategies? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?
17. Choose the top three topics that are likely to cause the most ideological conflict. (select 3)
18. Which of the following are the most likely reasons for conflict among ideological differences? (select all that apply)
19. Demographic Information
 - a. Race
 - b. Gender
 - c. Age
 - d. Religion
 - e. Political Affiliation
 - f. Current Work Industry
 - g. State of Residence
20. Would you like to receive a final copy of my thesis when it is completed? If yes, please provide your name and email address.

21. If you believe yourself to be a leader at your organization or in your personal community and would be willing to have a follow-up interview with me, please provide your name and contact information (phone, email).

Appendix D: Consent Form

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: Leading Authentically to Help Develop and Maintain Community Inclusive of Political and/or Ideological Differences.

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called “Leading Authentically to Help Develop and Maintain Community Inclusive of Political and/or Ideological Differences.” The study is being done by Jennifer McMurray, a Masters’ candidate student at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Dr. Sharon Radd, MAOL Program Director at St. Catherine University. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why are the researchers doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to uncover how leaders and ordinary people (non-facilitating leaders) can help others and themselves find a sense of community through political and/or ideological differences. Various components of authentic leadership (AL), definitions of AL, political ideologies, community, and ideological conflict management will be used to describe and form this issue. This study is important because we live in a polarized society where ideological differences divide us into “we” and “they.” Conversations and debates are hard to conduct because of people’s deeply held values and the fear many people experience when faced with difference. This study aims to develop a framework and ideas on how to push through this fear to find community with each other despite ideological differences. Approximately 20-50 people are expected to participate in a survey and 4-6 leaders will participate in a semi-structured interview for this research.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to be a part of this study because you are part of a community residing in the United States of America that has many differences and the researcher would like to hear your experience. You were recruited from either the researcher’s social media accounts and/or network or this request was sent to you by a friend who found it from these sources. By agreeing to participate in this study, you give your consent to the researcher to use your answers as part of data analysis for partial fulfillment of her master’s degree.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- Complete the 10-15 minute survey (available to anyone) and/or

- Participate in a 60-minute semi-structured interview (for self-identified leaders only)

In total, this study will take approximately 10-15 minutes (for survey participants) or 60 minutes (for self-identified leaders). If you take the survey and would also like to be interviewed as a leader in your organization or your personal community, the total time commitment is approximately 75 minutes. No additional follow-up will be necessary.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw until you submit your survey data to me. After this point, since the survey is anonymous, I will have no way of identifying which answers were yours. You may withdraw your interview up until I start coding the answers into numerical data. After this happens, withdrawal will no longer be possible. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research or the researcher herself.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

Beyond personal opinions of topics that likely cause tension between community members, there is no foreseeable risk. My survey will be anonymous unless the participant wants a copy of my thesis or volunteers to be interviewed and provides me their contact information. My interviews will be confidential and the participant names will be redacted and given a pseudonym. The likelihood of participants being identified is slim to none.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research. This study will benefit society because this study aims to provide a framework and ideas on how to push through fear of difference to find community with each other despite ideological differences.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in the survey will be taken along with the rest of the survey participant data and coded so that I can see patterns and frequency of responses in the data. The information that you provide (if applicable) in the interview will be transcribed and answers will be coded into themes that I will use in data analysis. All responses (survey or interview) will be under a pseudonym. The researcher will keep the research results on a password-protected

computer and only the researcher and her advisor will have access to the records while she works on this project. The researcher will finish analyzing the data by December 31, 2021 and will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you by December 31, 2022. The audio recordings of interviews will be under a password-protected device with only the researcher having access to the data. This data will not be presented to others for educational purposes outside the analysis for her thesis. The data will be destroyed by December 31, 2022.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any written reports or publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, the researcher will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the survey information will remain anonymous and the interview information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Could my information be used for future research?

No, your data will not be used or distributed for future research even if de-identified without gaining further consent from you.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during the course of this research study the researcher learns about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, she will inform you of these findings.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at jjmcmurray@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Dr. Sharon Radd at siradd@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be videotaped/audiotaped if I participate in the interview portion.

My signature indicates that I have read this information, my questions have been answered and I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix E: Avolio and Gardner (2005) Table 1

B.J. Avolio, W.L. Gardner / The Leadership Quarterly 16 (2005) 315–338

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Table 1

Comparison of authentic leadership development theory with transformational, charismatic, servant, and spiritual leadership theories

Components of authentic leadership development theory	TL	CL(B)	CL(SC)	SVT	SP
Positive psychological capital	✎	✎	✎		✎
Positive moral perspective	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Leader self-awareness					
Values	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Cognitions	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Emotions	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Leader self-regulation					
Internalized	✎		✎		✎
Balanced processing	✎				
Relational transparency	✎				
Authentic behavior	✎	✎	✎	✎	
Leadership processes/behaviors					
Positive modeling	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Personal and social identification	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Emotional contagion					
Supporting self-determination	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Positive social exchanges	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Follower self-awareness					
Values	✎		✎	✎	✎
Cognitions	✎		✎		✎
Emotions	✎		✎		✎
Follower self-regulation					
Internalized	✎	✎	✎	✎	✎
Balanced processing	✎				
Relational transparency	✎		✎		
Authentic behavior	✎		✎		✎
Follower development				✎	✎
Organizational context					
Uncertainty	✎	✎	✎		
Inclusion	✎				✎
Ethical	✎				
Positive, strengths-based				✎	
Performance					
Veritable					
Sustained	✎	✎			
Beyond expectations	✎	✎			✎

Note: ✎—Focal Component.

✎—Discussed.

Key: TL—Transformational Leadership Theory.

CL(B)—Behavioral Theory of Charismatic Leadership.

CL(SC)—Self-Concept Based Theory of Charismatic Leadership.

SVT—Servant Leadership Theory.

SP—Spiritual Leadership Theory.