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"RACE TALK" IN ORGANIZATIONAL DISCOURSE:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO TEXAS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

A Dissertation Presented

by

NATASHA SHRIKANT

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Department of Communication

"RACE TALK" IN ORGANIZATIONAL DISCOURSE:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO TEXAS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

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ABSTRACT

"RACE TALK" IN ORGANIZATIONAL DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO

TEXAS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

MAY 2016

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This dissertation takes an interpretive, discursive approach to understanding how organizational members create meanings about race, and other identities, through their everyday communication practices in the workplace. This dissertation also explores how these everyday discourses about race might reproduce, negotiate, or challenge ideologies that maintain the dominant position of Whiteness in United States racial hierarchies. I draw from data collected during eight months of ethnographic fieldwork (from Jan-Aug 2014) with two chambers of commerce in a large Texas city: an Asian American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) and what I call the "North City" Chamber of Commerce (NCC). The AACC explicitly identifies with a racial group, while the NCC identifies with a geographic region ("North City") associated with a White affluent identity.

Discourse analysis of audio and video recorded data gathered during fieldwork illustrates that, in this community, there are two prevalent discourses about race. One form of 'race talk' – practiced by Asians, minorities more generally, and White people who work with minority groups – can be characterized as explicitly addressing race as constitutive of professional identities. A second form of race talk, practiced by White NCC members, can be characterized as not explicitly discussing race and therefore implicitly invoking White identity as constitutive of professional identities. Overall, these forms of race talk illustrate how Asian identity is

constructed as foreign, local, and diverse, and White identity is constructed as an invisible, non-raced identity and as an authentic, Texan identity. Furthermore, these forms of race talk reproduce boundaries between White and non-White businesses and position Whiteness as the normal, taken for granted professional identity, and minority identities as marked, 'other' identities in the business community.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation analyzes and compares forms of "race talk" (Pollock, 2004) in a Texas business community. Race talk can broadly be defined as the study of "when and how" people "describe one another racially" (p. 1). Race talk has also been defined as the "key mechanism whereby the racial reasoning that upholds white privilege is propagated in everyday discourse" (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 385). In other words, race talk is not just about choosing when and how to categorize people but also has been shown to reproduce the dominant position of White racial identity in US racial hierarchies.

In this dissertation, I analyze two forms of race talk by drawing from ethnographic fieldwork with two organizations - an Asian American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) and what I call the "North City" Chamber of Commerce. I examine the various ways that race is invoked by members of the business community and how these ways of talking about race might reproduce or challenge ideologies that uphold racial hierarchies. The Asian American Chamber of Commerce explicitly identifies with a racial category ("Asian") and the race talk of chamber members and of non-members who address this chamber can be characterized as explicitly referencing race. The North City Chamber of Commerce does not explicitly identify with a racial group, but rather with a geographic region ("North City") which this community affiliates with a White, affluent identity. An analysis of member and non-member interactions for this chamber can be characterized as implicitly enacting a White racial identity. Race talk and racial identity is central to the communication, and subsequently business, practices of both chambers.

I make a distinction between the terms "race" and "ethnicity" when discussing chamber member interactions. Chamber member interactions for the most part orient to four racial categories: White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian. These categories are *racial* categories in the sense that they ignore and erase the *ethnic* diversity within each group (Omi & Winant, 2015). North City Chamber members rarely reference race, and the only time they explicitly characterized their

own racial identity, they used the term "White". Some Asian Chamber interactions do at times reference multiple ethnic identities (e.g., Korean, Filipino, Indian). However, Asian chamber members, through their participation in an Asian organization and through their communicative actions, position these different ethnicities as constituting and sometimes conflated with a racial "Asian" identity. Therefore, I characterize talk in both these chambers as "race" talk in particular because of their overarching orientation to racialized identity categories.

The fact that chamber members' communication practices often orient to these four racial categories does not, however, mean that the way these organizational members discuss race is simple and straightforward. The relationship between communication and race is complicated because although racial identity is popularly thought of as an essential identity that is biological, fixed, and concrete, racial identity is actually a product of historical inequalities that resulted in the classification of different groups of people according to phenotypic features (Omi & Winant, 2015). In other words, racial identity is socially constructed dependent on context. For example, the formation of both the White and Asian identities can be traced through histories of inequality. The White racial category was originally formed in opposition to the Black racial category to support systems of slave labor. At the time, the White category only included Nordic and Anglo-Saxon Europeans. Southern Europeans, Eastern Europeans, and Jewish people were seen as inferior races. However, these immigrant groups were able to eventually become White through disassociating themselves politically, socially, and culturally with Black Americans (Jewish: Brodkin, 2002; Irish: Ignatiev, 1995, Southern and Eastern European groups: Roediger, 2005). These ethnic groups had the privilege of being able to negotiate their position in racial hierarchies. They had the option of 'becoming White'.

Unlike European and Jewish ethnic groups, Asian Americans have not been able to become White. Many East Asian American groups (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipinos) have lived in the United States since the 1800s, speak in ways indistinguishable from White people, and also are economically successful. However, these groups are often positioned as

"forever foreigners" (Reyes & Lo, 2009) who, despite being born in the United States, are still popularly thought of as foreign. Another popular positioning of these groups is as a model minority, or "racially exceptional yet not of the mainstream" (Ono & Pham, p. 80; Shankar, 2008). This persistent 'otherness' can be explained by colonial histories between the United States and the various Far East Asian countries (China, Japan, Korea, Philippines) from which early Asian immigrants originated. These early Asians were popularly referenced as 'Orientals' and despite their various Far East origins were imagined as a singular exotic group who is at the same time dangerous and therefore needs to be feared and excluded from mainstream (White) American society (Lippi Green, 1997; Lowe, 2005; Ono & Pham, 2009). These groups also were treated the same and faced similar forms of discrimination because to most White Americans, all of these East Asian groups looked alike (Espiritu, 1992).

During the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, these Far East Asian groups adopted the racial category "Asian American", thereby rejecting the "Oriental" racial category. Asian American, therefore, is a racially associated term adopted by multiple East Asian groups who have historically been treated as a homogenous, racialized other. Unlike East Asians who were classified as Orientals, South Asians have historically been treated as "ambiguous non-Whites", classified as Caucasian but still denied the privileges of citizenship and owning land received by White Americans (Kibria, 1996). South Asians were added under the Asian American racial category in the 1990 census (Lee, 1993). Thus, both East Asians and South Asians currently 'count' as constituting the Asian American category.

Histories of the development of both White American and Asian American identity categories illustrate that neither category is based on some inherent biological similarity, but rather each has been arbitrarily negotiated based on specific histories of social inequality. Furthermore, both White and Asian identities are constituted by diverse ethnic identities. Therefore, the White and Asian racial identities tend to clash with the lived experiences of everyday people where race appears as a dynamic, situationally negotiated identity category. This

tension between fixed and dynamic nature of racial identity is especially relevant in the Chambers of Commerce that on one hand, are organizations that can be classified according to 'fixed' racial categories and on the other hand, are made up of individual people who negotiate multiple identities (racial and otherwise) through the course of their everyday interactions.

Therefore, in this dissertation, I take an interpretive approach (Geertz, 1973, 1983) to studying the meanings members construct about race and identity through their everyday communication practices. Below I first discuss my interpretive approach to studying communication, race, and identity. I follow this theoretical orientation with research questions addressed in this dissertation. Then, I explain how I use ethnographic and discourse analytic methods to address my research questions. I end this chapter with a preview of each of the following substantive analytical chapters.

A. Theoretical Framework

An interpretive approach can be characterized broadly as focusing on meanings that people construct and maintain through their communication practices (Geertz, 1973). In this dissertation, I explain meanings in terms of experience-near and experience-distant concepts (Geertz, 1983). An experience-near concept is one that a member of this business community could "naturally and effortlessly use to define what he or his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others" (p. 57). An experience-distant concept is one that I as the researcher use in an effort to make theoretical contributions to the study of communication, race, and identity. For example, an experience-near concept for members of the NCC might be 'barbecue talk'. This is something members practice and could explain. Barbecue talk as an index of Whiteness, however, is an experience distant concept, one which I use to explain how talking about barbecue provides insight into the relationship between communication, race, and identity. Overall, in this dissertation I balance between focusing on emic meanings, or meanings that foreground the members' viewpoint, and etic meanings, or meanings that foreground my insights as an analyst, to provide a more complete

picture of the various meanings that members construct about race and identity through their everyday practices (Duranti, 1997).

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Texas business community and focused on how members create and negotiate meanings about identity in and through the naturally occurring interactions that constitute their day-to-day lives. I treat interviews, where members report about their communication practices, as secondary data. In the Texas business community, I both participated in the social life of these organizations (e.g., I introduced myself at meetings, I helped staff members set up and clean up meanings, I provided my opinion about business decisions if asked), and I acted as an observer who documented communication practices while interfering as little as possible. Therefore, I became an accepted bystander (Duranti, 1997) in this community, one who was there to observe and learn and who occasionally participated in activities with other organizational members.

I draw from the ethnography of communication to understand how communication constructs meanings about race and identity and to understand the relationship between communication, meanings, and context (Hymes, 1964, 1972). Through my extended time (8 months, 2-3 days per week at each chamber) observing members' communication practices, I was able to learn and understand common ways of communicating among business community members, common identities invoked by members, and how members might differ in the way they address one another and the types of identities they make relevant. The communication practices of Texas business community members can be interpreted as constituting a Texan business speech community, or a "community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech" (Hymes, 1972, p. 54). Communication is patterned in ways that are taken for granted by a particular community. Furthermore, each speech community is also constituted by a *diversity* of "speech repertoires, ways of speaking, and choosing among them" (p. 40), and there are "multiple relations between linguistic means and social meanings" (p. 39). For example, members of the Texas business community share norms for business communication (e.g., talking about profits,

contracts, board members) but vary in how they engage in race talk. Therefore, when I analyze communication practices in this Texas business community, I examine how communication reflects what is shared by the whole community, how communication reflects diversity among members in this community, and the multiple 'linguistic means' through which members create 'social meanings' about race.

I also acknowledge how my participation in this chamber of commerce might affect the data I was able to gather. I was not an invisible observer, but rather was addressed by members in various ways (e.g., as an intern, a Texan, a member of the staff, a volunteer, a student), asked questions to members about their practices, and answered questions members might have about my observations (e.g., "What have been learning so far in your work?"). Being reflexive about my position in this community is important because of the "power of such factors as personality, social location in the community, intimacy of contact, and luck (not to mention theoretical orientation and self-conscious methodology) to shape fieldwork" (Abu-Lughod, 1986, p. 10). Therefore, below when I describe the ethnographic context for this community, I will address how I entered each organization and how I negotiated my positioning within each organization. In doing so, I attempt to by-pass the binary of insider versus outsider position of an ethnographer (Narayan, 1993). I will instead discuss the multiple ways that community members and I negotiated my positioning and how each of these ways contributed to my being treated as 'similar to' (e.g., I was Asian in the Asian chamber and Texan in the North City Chamber) or 'different from' (e.g., I was younger than most organizational members and positioned as an 'intern' who was 'studying the chamber') members of each organization.

While I use ethnography of communication to understand how meanings might be embedded in context, I use discourse analysis to foreground how meanings are interactionally negotiated in moment-to-moment interaction. Multiple approaches stemming from communication (cultural discourse analysis, Carbaugh, 2007), sociology (ethnomethodology, Garfinkel, 1967), psychology (discursive psychology, Edwards & Potter, 1992), linguistics

(interactional sociolinguistics, Gumperz, 1982; sociocultural linguistics, Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), and anthropology (linguistic anthropology, Duranti, 2009) have described the utility of discourse analysis for studying the relationship between communication, culture, and identity. While these theoretical approaches are positioned in different ways, they share in common an orientation to communication as constituting social life. In other words, communication not only reflects social contexts but also contributes to constituting social contexts in particular ways. In this dissertation, I focus on how communication constitutes identities.

Chamber members interactionally accomplish identities through mundane, taken for granted forms of communication (Garfinkel, 1967). From this perspective, identities are not a given that each member of a community 'has', but rather identities are accomplished through the way people interact with one another. Therefore, the identities that are relevant to a particular context can be examined by analyzing which identities community members foreground through their communication practices. One main way chamber members discursively construct and negotiate identities is through the "social positioning of the self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586). Through their communication practices, chamber members and other members of the business community construct both their own identities and the identities of various "others", including the identities of their interlocutor or general others who are not participating in a particular conversation. In other words, chamber member communication practices constitute boundaries among different identity groups, and in particular different racial groups (Barth 1969). Sometimes chamber communication practices reify boundaries among different racial groups (e.g., "we" are "Asian", "they" are "White"), while at other times chamber member communication negotiates these boundaries (e.g., "We are not Asian primarily"). Furthermore, racial identity, and identities in general, are a product of "self ascription" and "ascription by others" (p. 13) (e.g., the way the North City Chamber members characterize themselves and the way that other members of the business community characterize them play a role in negotiating their "White" identity).

I also examine how members' communication practices function to maintain or negotiate power relations among racial groups. Racial classification, after all, is inherently about histories of power relations among different groups that became manifested as differences in appearance (Omi & Winant, 2015). For example, Europeans colonized most of Asia, and the United States later on colonized and fought wars in many different countries in Asia (e.g., Philippines, Korea, Vietnam). Furthermore, the Chinese provided slave labor to build United States railroads and many Japanese Americans were put in internment camps during World War II. These colonial positions, that of the White colonizer and the non-White colonized, are the basis for the United States racial classification system. The current racialized position of Asians in relation to White members of this Texan community, therefore, could, in part, be a result of Asians' historical positioning as the colonized – both within and outside of the United States.

I illustrate the relationship between communication and power by analyzing how chamber members' construction of identities also indexes (Peirce 1985) ideologies about race. Ideologies are "cultural beliefs that serve the interests of some social groups over those of other groups" (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 5) and are often oriented to as 'common sense'. Furthermore, ideologies themselves "are produced in specific social and historical contexts as resources for gaining or maintaining power, and they are therefore subject to contestation and change" (p. 5). I investigate how members' communication practices reproduce, negotiate, or challenge, ideologies that uphold the position of Whiteness as dominant in US racial hierarchies.

B. Research Questions

1) How do members' communication practices interactionally accomplish race as relevant to organizational contexts?

2) How might members' race talk reproduce, negotiate, or challenge ideologies that maintain the dominant position of Whiteness in United States racial hierarchies?

3) What theoretical contributions do these findings make to the study of communication, race, and identity?

Below, I first describe how I selected and entered the field for my ethnographic research. I then explain the process through which I recorded, logged, and transcribed data. Third, I describe the ethnographic context for the Texas business community, each chamber of commerce, and my own position in relation to each chamber. This ethnographic context is necessary to fully understand and interpret the following analysis of chamber member communication practices. I then explain how I use the concept of indexicality (Peirce, 1985; Silverstein, 1976) to inform the discourse analysis of chamber member interactions. I close by presenting a preview of the four substantial chapters in this dissertation: Differences in Chamber Race Talk, Asian American Panethnicity, Asian American Racialization, and Whiteness in the North City Chamber.

C. Methodology

1. Ethnography: Finding and Entering the Field

I conducted fieldwork in what I call "Big City", Texas. I am originally from Texas and have lived in multiple cities in the state, including in Big City. After moving away from Texas to attend various graduate programs, I noticed that people in Texas (both White and non-White) often talk about race more explicitly than people in the small Midwest and Northeast college towns I have lived in since. Therefore, I wanted to return to Texas to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork and pursue my general interest in studying the relationship between communication and racial identity.

During my research, I found that there were multiple chambers of commerce in Big City and that some of them were racially identified (e.g., the Black Chamber, the Hispanic Chamber, and the Asian Chamber). I therefore selected studying the chambers of commerce as a field site that would help investigate the relationship between communication, race, and identity. I contacted several chambers via email and received permission from the Asian American Chamber and the North City Chamber to observe chamber meetings, events, and day to day interpersonal interactions. I also received permission to audio and/or video record most events that I attended. Both chambers knew that I was working with the other chamber, and I spent 2-3 days per week at

each chamber of commerce, arriving in the morning and staying throughout the day to sit in on various meetings. I also accompanied chamber staff members to meetings outside of the office. During chamber events I was often introduced as an "intern" who was "studying the chamber" for my graduate work. I was also the same age as many younger professionals (in my 20s) and was therefore oriented to by chamber members (most of whom were in their 40s-60s) as a mentee whom they could advise about business. Therefore, I was relatively easily able to ask and get permission to record chamber events and meetings, and I could also ask follow up questions in a natural way – a way that would resemble a mentee asking a mentor. Many times chamber members explained aspects of their communication without my asking, in an effort to "teach" me about business.

2. Data Gathering and Selection

I conducted eight months of ethnographic fieldwork from January-August 2014. Chamber staff members gave me permission to audio and sometimes video record staff meetings, committee meetings, and interpersonal interactions. For public events held by the chamber where invited guest speakers addressed chamber membership, I asked permission from the speakers to film the events as a courtesy. Overall, I audio and video recorded about 150 hours of data. Throughout my fieldwork, I also kept field notes that I wrote during each event. In my field notes I attempted to bracket my commonsense assumptions from more objective observations of communication practices (Duranti, 1997). I did so through taking field notes in columns: one column noted what community members said, one column noted what I found interesting or relevant about what they said, and a third column noted the time they said it for purposes finding this interactional moment in my recordings. I also starred particular communication events that were most relevant to my study's goal of understanding the relationship between communication, race, and identity.

I then listened and viewed the audio and video recorded data that I starred in my field notes and typed more detailed logs following the same three column structure I used in my field

notes. I created logs for 50 hours of my audio and video recorded data. Using these logs, I was able to identify patterns in the way people addressed race in each chamber of commerce. For example, members of the Asian Chamber explicitly named racial categories, the North City chamber used colorblind terms to address race (e.g., using "an interesting fabric of folks" to discuss racial diversity in Texas), explicitly identified using non-racial terms (e.g., "friends", "members", "visitors") and implicitly enacted Southern, masculine identities (e.g., by discussing barbecuing in a matter of fact manner, chamber members are enacting Southern identity).

While many of my logs contained roughly transcribed data, I only formally transcribed the data, according to conversation analytic conventions (Jefferson, 2004), that I actually present in this dissertation. These data are examples of the patterns of communication I identified after logging my audio and video recorded files. Specifically, my transcription of this data shows which words people emphasize, when people overlap in speaking, when someone pauses and approximately for how long, when there is laughter, and I make notes about gaze or other gestures that I draw from video recordings or field notes. I also introduce each segment and describe the ethnographic context within which each presented interaction takes place. I acknowledge that this is a partial representation of the lived experiences of chamber members, but this selection and transcription process does allow me to highlight how members construct and interpret meanings through interactions within a particular context.

An example of this research process is below. In my field notes in the Asian Chamber, I starred observations of the multiple times that Asian chamber members explicitly referenced racial categories. One of the communication events I starred was the Asian Chamber's Annual Meeting. I re-watched the video recording of this event, and typed a detailed log of the times during this event where various speakers address race. I roughly transcribed about 45 minutes of this two hour event. I continued logging other communication events I starred in my field notes, and eventually identified main patterns in which Asian Chamber members engaged in race talk. For example, one way Asian chamber members address race is by using the word 'Asian' as a

defining quality of their organization. I then formally transcribed a thirty second segment where the president of the Asian chamber discusses and defines the chamber's 'Asian' identity when he publicly addresses the Texas business community at the Chamber annual meeting. This example is presented and analyzed in detail in Chapter 3: Asian Panethnicity.

3. Ethnographic Context: Race and Communication in "Big City", Texas

During my preliminary research, I found that Big City has numerous chambers of commerce (over 10, where most cities of its size only have 1-2 chambers). Among these chambers of commerce, members of the AACC and the NCC listed two types of chambers: the, in their words, "ethnic chambers" and "area chambers". Ethnic chambers included racially based chambers of commerce (e.g., the Black Chamber, the Hispanic Chamber, and the Asian American Chamber). Area chambers included regionally affiliated chambers of commerce (e.g., the North City Chamber, the South City Chamber, the East City Chamber, the West City Chamber). Thus, racial categories, in this community, were directly relevant to their classification of businesses[1].

One main reason race is relevant for many people in the community is because there are numerous race-based organizations, similar to the race-based chambers of commerce. These organizations are known about and matter-of-factly referenced (e.g., "Natasha's working with the Asian chamber and with us") by members of all races in this community. There is an assumption, on the part of White Texans, that these organizations exist to support the different "cultures" of different racial groups. There are also explicitly advertised diversity policies in large private corporations and in public, government affiliated organizations (e.g., We hire x percent of minority employees; We offer grants for businesses who are owned and operated by ethnic minorities and women). Supporting diversity is often talked about as a positive, moral, quality of organizations.

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[1] There are also other ethnically based chambers – for example the Indo-American chamber, the French American chamber – and one LGBTQ chamber. While the "area" and "ethnic" chambers knew one another's staff and sometimes attended one another's events, these other chambers were not included as part of the "area" and "ethnic" business community.

The existence of these race-based organizations and diversity policies can be explained both in terms of history and the current racial make-up of Big City. Race-based organizations stem from histories of racial segregation and discrimination in Texas. Minorities in Texas were forcibly excluded from business communities and therefore formed their own businesses to support interests of their own communities. The Black and Hispanic chambers, for example, were formed in the early 1900s – pre-Civil Rights. Today, these communities are maintained primarily because of affirmative action policies that support minority-and-women owned businesses (businesses 51% owned by a racial minority and/or woman[2]). Texas's state affirmative action program is called the "historically underutilized businesses" (HUBs) program. According to a report from the Texas Comptroller, HUB policies require that state agencies are required to make a 'good faith' effort to award at least 11.9% of heavy construction contracts, 26.1% of building contracts, 57.2% of trade construction contracts, 20% of professional service contracts, 33% of other service contracts, and 12.6% of commodities contracts be given to HUBs in a fiscal year[3]. Therefore, race based organizations were sustained because of discrimination and continue to exist because of affirmative action policies that reward these organizations based on minority owned status.

Big City is also currently a racially diverse city. According to the 2010 US Census, "Big City," Texas, is 50% White, 25% Black, or African American, 3% Asian, and 22% "other race," a category often chosen by U.S. Hispanics. In the census, 43% of the total Big City population, across races, identifies as having a Hispanic ethnicity. Although the census does not recognize Hispanic as a racial group, in everyday life, Hispanics in Big City are generally treated as a racial group, alongside the White, Black, and Asian racial groups. Overall, due to this history of racial segregation, affirmative action policies, and the current diversity, there is a large racially

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[2] While there is a Texas Women's Chamber for the state, there is not a locally (city) based Women's chamber of commerce. In this community "minority and women owned business" is usually owned by a racial minority (male or female).
[3] Incidentally, the report shows that only 10% of contracts are being given to HUBs in each of these categories

segregated public presence in Big City, often visible through racially identified institutions. These institutions, the people who work for them, and their racial identities are often made relevant in member interactions.

The purpose of each chamber of commerce was to support its member businesses specifically and the economic development in Big City more generally. They did so through holding networking events, inviting guest speakers to give advice to members, and by working with local government officials to get pro-business policies passed (e.g., lower taxes for businesses or even building highways and parks that would make a community more welcoming for consumers and business owners). Each chamber had about forty board members, five staff members, and hundreds of regular members. Board members either own economically successful businesses or work for large corporations that are members of the chambers. Board members served as volunteers (e.g., they were not paid). This was a type of "service" to the business community. Staff members are hired by board members to run the chamber of commerce. Staff members' salary depends on the success of the chamber and therefore they are often more invested in chamber activities. Members of the chamber pay a yearly fee depending on the size of their organization (ranging from $150 for businesses with 5 people to $10,000 for large corporations). This fee grants access to chamber events. Corporations often receive partnerships in addition to membership where the Chamber, in return for the money, advertises for the corporations as 'sponsors' of their event. Below I describe the ethnographic context of each chamber of commerce, focusing on how the social context of each chamber might inform the types of 'race talk' that each chamber practiced.

i. Asian American Chamber of Commerce.

The Asian American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) was started in the 1980s at the request of (White) Texas Senators who wanted a place to access votes from Asian people. Members of this chamber of commerce are mostly immigrants from over 22 different Asian countries, including countries in East Asia (e.g., China, Korea), Southeast Asia (e.g., Indonesia, Vietnam),

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and South Asia (e.g., India, Pakistan). These people did not identify as "Asian" before arriving to the United States, but adopted this category upon their arrival. In the Asian chamber, I worked mostly with their five staff members (all pseudonymed): Alf, the president of the chamber who is from the Philippines, Clara, the director of marketing and events who is from Indonesia, Woo-Jin, the director of membership who is from South Korea, Grace, the membership assistant who is Vietnamese-American (e.g., her parents are immigrants from Vietnam, and she was born and grew up in Texas), and Candace, the director of the Chamber's foundation who is Black American.

The AACC mission statement is "to advocate for its members and the Asian American business community while assisting the economic development in [region omitted][4] Texas". The phrasing of the AACC mission statement (the AACC advocates for "its members" and "the Asian American business community") indicates that not all AACC members are Asian American businesses and not all Asian American businesses are members, but *all* members are businesses. Thus, "to advocate" means to support *businesses* and policies that help AACC members and Asian American business owners and workers gain economic capital. In this way, the AACC positions itself not only as an organization that helps Asians but one that supports businesses and therefore contributes to "assisting the economic development" of Big City.

AACC board members and staff members support the member and Asian American businesses in two ways: by planning events that inform AACC members about opportunities for their businesses locally and internationally and by supporting policies that increase minority business participation in the local economy. Alf, the president and CEO of the AACC, explains that while the chamber does hold networking events where their member businesses can meet one another and form professional relationships, on a larger scale the AACC works with the Black and Hispanic Chambers to advocate for policies that encourage more Asian and minority business participation in the local economy. They do so by asking state politicians to increase the required

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[4] Region omitted for confidentiality purposes

percentage of minority owned businesses that any organization taking federal money has to hire (e.g., public organizations and private organizations that receive government grants all need to comply with affirmative action policies established by the state and federal governments). Alf also helps his members become officially 'minority certified', or submit paperwork to a third party organization that provides an official certificate classifying a business as minority and women owned, so these businesses are eligible to apply for grants targeted towards minority businesses.

The AACC orientation to race was also evident in the way they oriented to me. Members of the AACC, who were mostly immigrants from different countries in Asia, were curious about my ethnicity. I am Indian-American. My parents were born in India and immigrated to the United States as adults, and I was born and grew up in Texas. As an Indian American, I (or at least my Indian immigrant parents) fit the profile of the typical AACC member. Therefore, I was able to establish rapport with this group as a fellow Asian.

ii.   The North City Chamber of Commerce.

The North City Chamber of Commerce (NCC) was started in the 1950s and has since had all White, Texan male and female chairs of the board. Furthermore, most NCC board members and regular members are White I only saw 1-5 non-White attendees at some of the larger NCC events. This is in contrast to AACC events, where audiences included members of all racial groups. The majority was non-White, but there were a few dozen White Americans at Asian Chamber public events. The NCC is also located in what is popularly understood as the "White" part of town, where many affluent White people live. The five NCC staff members who I worked with are also White and also from Texas: Frank, the president, Eileen, the vice president, George, the director of marketing, Brian, the director of events, and Kate, the IT director.

The NCC does not have a listed mission statement, but in its 'about' page says the following: "Membership in the North City Chamber allows you to develop your business, grow your network, keep up to date with local issues and make City a better place to live work, raise a

family and build a business." This statement foregrounds personal gains each member receives (develop *your* business, grow *your* network) and what each individual member can accomplish (make City a better place to…). *The* NCC supports its members businesses, most of which are small to medium sized locally based businesses, through holding networking events, inviting speakers and planning panels to inform members about various aspects of business (e.g., how to be a good leader, how to get the most out of your employees, how to maintain an effective organizational culture), and working with local government and politicians to stay informed about new policies passed and new opportunities for business growth. Decisions about events and programs are made through a committee system, with the main executive committee made up of board members who set policy and various other specialized committees comprised of board members and other chamber member volunteers (e.g., small business committee, education committee, young professionals committee). During my fieldwork, I attended both staff meetings and many of the NCC committee meetings.

While many minority members of the business community saw this chamber as a "White" chamber, chamber members for the most part characterized themselves as non-raced. Chamber members did not discuss racial categories and instead used categories such as "friends", "visitors", and "members" to classify people. When orienting to me, Chamber members were interested in my local identity as a fellow Texan. I am originally from Texas, and chamber members often asked me about where I grew up and what high school and college I attended. As a Texan, I was able to establish similarity and rapport with the group. Members of the NCC did not ask about my racial or ethnic identity (I am Indian-American) in public or business related conversations.

4. Discourse Analysis: Indexicality and the Analysis of Race Talk

I use the concept of indexicality to examine both how chamber members interactionally accomplish racial identities in their moment to moment interactions *and* how their communication practices might reproduce ideologies that maintain racial hierarchies. Drawing

from Peirce's (1985) semiotic theory of language, an index is a sign that points to meanings as interpreted by interactants in a particular context. Indexes point to both meanings created within a particular interaction and to larger social meanings (Silverstein, 2003). To analyze meanings, I conduct a turn by turn analysis and focus on the actions members take through each turn of talk (Schegloff 1995). In doing so, I focus not on the structure of talk, but on how the way members orient to one another's utterances through talk creates meanings about identities.

One way that members' practices index meanings in interaction is through their overt naming and characterizing of different identities (e.g., "Asians are culturally diverse", "We're dragons here"). A second common way chamber members index meanings is through using pronouns (Silverstein 1976) as a referential index for different people and characterizing different people in different ways (e.g., "I'll be real honest", "We do international work", "they challenged us"). Pronouns also function to position groups in relation to one another. For example, many organizational members use "we" to position themselves as a member of their organization use "you" or "they" to position their interlocutor as members of a separate group. Last, a turn by turn analysis (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) of chamber member interactions reveals how the sequential organization of chamber member talk indexes interactional meanings. Turn by turn analysis of interaction can reveal how participants themselves make sense of the talk in which they are engaged. Each utterance displays an understanding of the prior turn(s) at talk (Heritage, 2005). Each chapter contains further details about how I analyzed data from that chapter.

In addition to interactional meanings, chamber practices also index social meanings. More specifically chamber member practices index cultural norms in each organization and ideologies about race. Each organization can be characterized as being constituted by the shared communication practices of its members. In other words, each organization can be conceptualized as a culture (Smircich, 1983), and communication can be characterized as an "expressive system of symbols, symbolic forms, and meanings that, when used, constitutes a common sense of the working self and work-life" (Carbaugh, 1996, p. 63). For example, communication practices in

the AACC involve the explicit mention their own and others' racial identities as directly constituting their professional identities (e.g., she is an "African American, Asian, woman" and therefore was the best professional candidate for the diversity contract). Interactions among White NCC members, however, implicitly foreground a Texan masculine, White, identity as constituting their professional identities. In addition to these differences, chamber member communication reflects norms for interaction (Hymes 1972) prevalent in the business community: to talk in ways that meet an organization's goals to make profit and expand business networks. Thus choices members of the business community make in *how* to racially characterize members are governed by their professional, institutional goals. Thus, communication practices in each chamber are not only the product of situational interactions but also a reflection of norms in each organization and the business community in general.

Chamber member communication practices for the most part reproduce ideologies about race but at times do negotiate and challenge ideologies. Chamber member communication practices often invoke essentialist ideologies of race (Omi & Winant, 2015). Essentialist ideologies posit "that race is fundamentally about differences in physical appearance and that members of different racial groups have an underlying, or essential, nature that is part and parcel of this racial identity" (Bailey, 2010, p. 73). The three ethnic chambers in Big City – the Black Chamber, the Hispanic Chamber, and the Asian Chamber – all reflect this ideology that members of these various racial groups have some sort of natural connection to one another and therefore would belong to the same organization. Communication practices among Asian chamber members often reproduce essentialist ideologies about race when addressing non-Asian racial groups (e.g., "Black", "Hispanic"), but challenge this ideology when speaking about their own racial group. For example, Alf discusses how "Asian" is an unfamiliar identity category for most of the immigrant members of the AACC who prefer to identify according to different nationally based identities (e.g., "Indian", "Korean", "Vietnamese").

While essentialist ideologies of race often manifest in the explicit labeling of racial minority groups, the White racial group is oriented to as invisible, normative and therefore not explicitly labeled (Bucholtz, 2011). In the Big City community, for example, the North City Chamber is known as a "White" chamber, has mostly White members, and communicates in ways that construct a White identity but is not explicitly labeled a "White" chamber of commerce. The invisibility of Whiteness speaks to the ways in which essentialist ideologies structure power relations among White and non-White groups. Race not only functions as an identity category that draws what many people perceive to be 'natural' boundaries between groups, but also as a hegemonic structure that serves to legitimate the cultural authority of the dominant (White, upper middle class, male) group as 'common sense' (Woolard, 1985).

The construction of power relations between different groups is evident in everyday communication practices by both White and non-White members of the business community that racialize, or mark minority racial and ethnic groups as 'others'. For example, while all members of the business community explicitly reference and categorize racial minorities, members usually do not do so for White members of the business community. These communication practices reproduce status quo racial hierarchies in which Whiteness is valued as the dominant, unmarked racial category (Dick & Worth, 2011; Silverstein, 2005). Therefore, through collaboration and consent, both White and non-White members of the business community reproduce essentialist ideologies about race and contribute to maintaining the invisible, normative position of White identity in US racial hierarchies.

Overall, this dissertation examines the multiple communicative resources members draw upon when negotiating racial identities of themselves and of others. Furthermore, this dissertation examines how communication practices might reflect ideologies about race and consequences of these communication practices for racial hierarchies in the Big City business community and the United States more generally.

D. Summary of Chapters

The first chapter of this dissertation illustrates a main difference in "race talk" between the two chambers of commerce. The norm in the AACC is to explicitly talk about race, while the norm in the NCC is to avoid discussions of race. Furthermore, in each chamber of commerce race is constituted as a professional identity, one that is directly relevant to conducting business. Overall, this chapter illustrates how chamber member interactions reproduce essentialist ideologies that preserve the invisibility of Whiteness and the markedness of racial minority groups.

Chapters two and three focus on 'race talk' pertinent to the Asian American Chamber. Chapter two analyzes how Asian Chamber members creatively self-ascribe identities to meet organizational goals and gain political power. The Asian Chamber constructs a culture of diversity as relevant to their chamber and often explicitly points out national and linguistic differences among their members. Therefore, chamber members can easily alternate among different racial and ethnic categories when participating in their organization. Depending on organizational goals, Asian chamber members at times invoke the Asian category, at times deny its relevance, and at times replace the Asian category with various other national identity categories (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Pakistani). Therefore, the diverse identity constructed by chamber members allows them flexibility in using their identification to meet business goals. While this helps to undermine the homogenous Asian identity category imposed by outsiders, chamber members still engage in explicitly discussing race and therefore reproducing their racially marked identity.

Chapter three analyzes 'ascription by others', or how White politicians and members of the business community address the Asian Chamber and in doing so reproduce the marginalization of the Asian business community. For the most part, White members of the community address the Asian chamber members as a singular group, thus reproducing essentialist ideologies of race. If White members recognize intra-Asian differences, it is for the purposes of

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meeting their institutional goals. For example, a baseball team's business representative names the "Korean" and "Japanese" identities because her organization is interested in Korean and Japanese consumers who might buy tickets to watch the team's Korean and Japanese baseball players. Therefore, both essentialist ideologies of race and cultural norms about business (e.g., the need to meet business goals) play a role in how outsiders address chamber members. Overall, this chapter illustrates the power that White members of the business community have in defining how Asians should identify in different contexts depending on their own organizational goals (goals which often conflict with the Asian Chamber goals for political empowerment).

Chapter four illustrates how both self ascription and ascription by others play a role in constructing the North City Chamber as a White chamber of commerce. North City chamber members engage in colorblind discourses, thereby avoiding explicit discussions of race, and instead foreground a southern, masculine identity through their communication practices. These discourses reproduce a White identity for chamber members primarily because these members do *not* acknowledge race and therefore illustrate their privilege of a business that can operate without addressing racial diversity. This is especially a marker of Whiteness in this business community where many minority-owned businesses *and* large corporations explicitly address race. Therefore, minority members of the business community often characterize this chamber as a "White" chamber that is not forward thinking because it does not engage with issues of diversity.

CHAPTER 2

"AFRICAN AMERICAN ASIAN…AND WOMAN" VS. "WE DON'T ASK THAT QUESTION": DIFFERENCES IN RACE TALK FOR TWO TEXAS CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE[5]

In this chapter, I outline how race is discursively constructed as a professional identity category in each chamber of commerce. Multiple studies examining the discursive construction of racial and ethnic minority identity categories in the workplace have focused on how minorities adapt what are implicitly or explicitly considered marked communication practices to the dominant, normative practices of their White coworkers (e.g., Bridgewater & Buzzanell, 2010; Holmes, Marra, & Schnurr, 2008; Orbe, 1998; Van De Mieroop, 2012). This study, however, in focusing on one organization with only minority employees (the Asian Chamber) and one organization with only White employees (the North City Chamber), examines the distinctiveness of each group's discursive construction of professional identities in their own right, thus decentering Whiteness as the normative, invisible professional identity category against which minority categories are compared (Grimes, 2002; Nkomo, 1992).

By decentering Whiteness, this study attempts "to name, unmask" and "uncover" (Grimes, 2002, p. 389) the multiple implicit ways that normative communication practices are associated with a White racial identity. Ultimately this analysis illustrates how AACC and NCC members position racial and ethnic identity as constituting professional identities in their organizations and how their shared understanding about these identities surfaces in their organizational communication practices.

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[5] A version of this chapter has been published and therefore, much of the text overlaps with the following peer reviewed journal article:
Shrikant, N. (2015). The Discursive Construction of Race as a Professional Identity Category in Two Texas Chambers of Commerce. *International Journal of Business Communication.* DOI: 10.1177/2329488415594156

Below, I outline how conceptualizing race and professional identities as membership categories (Sacks, 1974; Stokoe, 2012) is useful for understanding how chamber members communication practices index meanings about race, professional identity, and the relationship between the two. The analysis of AACC and NCC organizational communication practices illustrates how the AACC explicitly incorporates race as a professional identity category, while the NCC avoids discussions of race as being pertinent to their professional identities.

The first example illustrates how the overt mentioning of racial categories (e.g., "Black," "Asian") and business practices (e.g., winning a contract) are integrated in AACC members' organizational communication practices. The second example illustrates how NCC members use identity categories that do not explicitly refer to racial categories (e.g., "visitors," "members," and "friends") but do inadvertently and implicitly construct Whiteness as an NCC professional identity. The third example is also from the NCC and illustrates how the overt mention of a racial identity category (e.g., "minority- and women-owned business") is positioned by NCC members as irrelevant to NCC professional identity categories. To conclude, this chapter discusses the multiple ways that racial and ethnic identity can be intertwined with professional identities in naturally occurring organizational communication practices and how these practices may reproduce racial hierarchies in the Big City business community.

A. Race and Professional Identities as Membership Categories

Membership categorization analysis (MCA) is an approach originally developed by Sacks (1974). Key to the MCA approach is focusing on "members, rather than analysts' categories" and examining how members organize their social worlds using these identity categories (Stokoe, 2012, p. 278). In the below examples, members often explicitly mention identity categories (e.g., "Black" and "Asian" in the AACC, and "friends" and "visitors" in the NCC) and define these categories by naming category-bound activities. Category bound activities are members construct as being an important part of a particular identity category (Stokoe, 2012). For example, "Asian firms" are characterized as not "submitting" to win a contract in the Asian Chamber. NCC

members characterize "visitors" as people who "come and visit and see" members of the chamber. In analyzing how members name and position identity categories in relation to one another, I am able to construct cultural propositions (Carbaugh, 2007), or members' definitions for identities that constitute their organizations. I also examine how the use of membership categories implicitly reflect and reproduce norms, or "statements about conduct which are granted some degree of legitimacy" (p. 178), for each organization. Last, identity categories in each organization are treated by the participants as making up a "professional identity" membership categorization device, that is, an "apparatus through which categories are understood to 'belong' to a collective category" (Stokoe, 2012, p. 281). Professional identities are defined as "identities that are constructed within, or which are related to, an institutional context" (Van De Mieroop & Clifton, 2012).

In the examples below, the members define and evaluate identity categories in relation to each particular organizational context. AACC participants position racial categories (e.g., "Black," "Asian") as professional identity categories belonging *within* the professional membership categorization device. NCC members position non-raced categories (e.g., "friends," "visitors," "members") as belonging *within* the professional membership categorization device and deny racial categories as belonging within this device. Thus, analysis of AACC and NCC practices illustrates how participants of an explicitly racially identified organization and participants in an implicitly White-identified organization differently construct the types of identity categories belonging under the larger "professional identity membership categorization device".

Members' communication practices index tensions between essentialist and colorblind ideologies. AACC communication practices often reproduce essentialist ideologies about race (Bailey, 2010), orienting to socially constructed racial categories (e.g., Black, Asian, Hispanic) as having inherent traits that connect them to one another and often do not orient to the existence of mixed-race individuals who might not fit preexisting racial categories. NCC communication

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practices often reproduce ideologies of colorblindness, "characterized by members of the

dominant (white) racial group viewing themselves in nonracial terms, as 'just people,' rather than

identifying as members of a racial category" and often avoiding discussion of race in general

(Whitehead & Lerner, 2009, p. 617). Overall, this analysis illustrates the multiple identities

participants make relevant in their organizational communication practices, and how use of

identity categories illustrates participants' orientation to larger meanings about race and ethnicity

in organizational contexts.

1. **"Why Did You Give It to the Blacks?" Race, Politics, and Business in the AACC**

The following example from an AACC staff meeting illustrates how talk about racial

identification and ways of doing business are incorporated in participants' organizational

communication practices. The analysis illustrates how the overt mention of racial categories is

intertwined with the relevant professional identities in the AACC. This excerpt is from an AACC

weekly staff meeting in which Alf, the President of the AACC, is providing a "background" and a

"discovery" to the rest of his staff. The "background" and "discovery" are revealed in the form of

a narrative (Miller, Fung, & Koven, 2007; Ochs, 2004). Narratives "depict or evoke an ordered

sequence of events" (Ochs, 2004, p. 270) and function "to create, perform, and transform social

realities" (Miller et al., 2007, p. 597). Furthermore, when telling narratives, participants often co-

tell narratives and in doing so, "position themselves relative to each other, and to broader

sociocultural values and types of people" (p. 597). In organizational settings, narratives function

"as a shortcut to the display of professional identity" (Blazkova, 2011, p. 447). Thus, through this

narrative, Alf and other participants provide insight into professional identity categories

comprising a particular social reality (that of the AACC and the Big City minority business

community) and position themselves in relation to the identities and meanings negotiated through

this narrative.

The following analysis illustrates how the President of the AACC, Alf, along with other

staff members, construct the professional identity of Jasmine Jackson, a local business owner,

through the narrative they co-tell during the AACC weekly staff meeting. Alf discusses how Jasmine was awarded a contract to plan celebrations leading up to a direct flight from Big City to Shanghai and Hong Kong. Alf, thinking that Jasmine is African American, is "critical," wondering why the contract to celebrate a direct flight to "Asian" cities was given to "the Blacks" and not to "an Asian." Then, Alf reveals that he "discovered" that Jasmine is in fact "Filipina." Alf, while being surprised that someone "Black" can also be "Filipina," is no longer "critical" that Jasmine received the contract. Other participants add their evaluations of Jasmine Jackson's identities as well. Other participants in this interaction include Clara, the director of events and marketing, Candace, the director of the AACC foundation, and Grace, the Membership assistant. Alf is from the Philippines, Clara is from Indonesia, Candace self-identifies as Black American, and Grace self-identifies as Vietnamese American. This example is typical of AACC discussion in that members often orient to people's racial identification and overtly refer to racial and ethnic categories, but is atypical in the sense that it is not often that members "discover" that someone does not fit preexisting assumptions about identity (e.g., that

Jasmine is Black and Filipina).

Prior to this excerpt, Alf is reviewing everyone's schedule of meetings for the day. He mentions a meeting that he and Clara have later in the day with Ariana, a woman who owns a business that is partnering with Jasmine Jackson to plan the events, and Clara states that Alf does not have to come to the meeting with her because the meeting will be about event planning specifics. Alf agrees that he does not have to attend the meeting, but because he will not attend the meeting, decides to provide Clara a "background" (Line 1) about the meeting:

Example 2.1
1	Alf	Okay, let me give you a background
2	Clara	Sure
3	Alf	which is another discovery for me
4	Clara	Okay ((laughs))
5	Alf	See I was very critical (1). There is a flight to Shanghai and Hong Kong. They
6		call it inaugural flight. But they have a series of celebration from <u>May</u> (.) and
7		then the first flight in <u>June</u> (.) and to ↑do that they (.) the airport (1) put out a <u>bid</u>
8		(.) and (1) any of the vendors to the e<u>vents</u> (.) okay? S:o (.) this is a series of

9		events. That's why the vendor (.) who <u>won</u> the contract (1) has to be a minority
10		certified and airport certified. And I <u>no</u>ticed that (.) Jasmine (1) Jackson got the
11		contract. K my reaction why did you give it to the Blacks? (.) Why not to an
12		Asian now (.) first of all (.) probably there was no Asian (.) firm (.) submitted.
13		*(lists names of multiple Asian firms that did not submit)*
14	Clara	to plan the [inauguration flight to Asia?
15	Alf	[to plan (.) yeah
16	Clara	Oka(h)(h)y=
17	Alf	=these are all celebrations (1) okay?
18	Clara	Okay
19	Alf	So Jasmine (1) asked for as helper (.) [Ariana
20	Clara	[Oh(h)(h)Okay
21	Alf	to do the specifi-because Jasmine's big,
22	Clara	Right
23	Alf	Now (1) I discovered last Friday (1) Thursday that Jasmine is ^{0}bla:ck^0
24	Clara	(h)(h)(h) ^{0}bla:ck^0=
25	Alf	=But Filipina
26	Clara	<u>Oh!</u> ((LAUGHTER)) Alf
27	Candace	See there you go.
28	Alf	When we were in the panel [she introduced herself.
29	Candace	[That's why she won
30	Alf	I am Jasmine Jackson. I am a Filipina and I blah blah blah and I (.) what I said
31		who↑oo?
32	Grace	((laughter))
33	Alf	That's probably she'll get it because African American Asian minority.
34	Clara	And woman
35	Alf	[And woman]
36	Candace	[And woman], triple minority=
37	Grace	=Man she's a triple threat
38	Alf	Yeah she's got the triple u:h [criteria.
39	Others	[((laughter))

Alf uses the discourse marker (Schiffrin, 1987) "okay" (Line 1) to mark the beginning of the "background" (Line 1). Alf's utterance, "let me give you a background" (Line 1) is a story preface sequence used to mark the beginning of the narrative (Sacks, 1974). Clara understands that Alf plans on speaking for an extended period of time to describe the "background" and illustrates this understanding in her response ("Sure," Line 2). Alf then begins his story by marking his first identity category, characterizing himself as "critical" (Line 5), thus positioning himself in relation to the "background" he will reveal.

Alf then explains that an airline in the City Airport just announced a direct flight from Big City to Shanghai and Hong Kong, and therefore, the airport is planning a series of celebrations leading up to the inaugural flight (Lines 5-7). Alf constructs "the airport" as a

relevant professional identity characterized by the category-bound activity, to "put out a bid" (Line 7). This means that the airport announced the availability of a contract for a company to plan and execute these celebrations. Multiple companies are allowed to compete for the bid (in other words, outline how they will execute the events and the cost for the company's services), and the airport will then decide which company to give the contract based on the company's bid. Alf continues by using more jargon: "That's why the vendor who won the contract has to be a minority-certified and airport-certified" (Lines 9-10). Here, Alf is constructing another identity category "vendor," who in addition to being able to provide services also needs to be "minority-certified" and "airport-certified." Thus, Alf is intertwining non-raced professional categories ("vendor") with bureaucratic categories ("minority-certified"). Businesses who wish to become minority-certified apply for this certification through third-party organizations. According to the website of one of the third-party organizations, a business can apply to be "minority-certified" if 51% of the business is owned, managed, and operated by ethnic minorities or women. The listed minority groups include American Indians, Aleuts, Asian Pacific Americans, Black Americans, Eskimos, Hispanic Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Subcontinent Asian Americans. Proof of race/ethnicity in the form of a birth certificate, tribal card, or motor vehicle license is required with the application. After becoming minority-certified, these businesses become eligible for any diversity initiatives taken by larger corporations (like the Big City Airport). Being "airport-certified" means getting an airport-approved, third-party organization to provide the "'minority-certified" documentation (different businesses require certification from different third parties).

Alf then reveals that Jasmine Jackson received the contract and positions himself in relation to this decision: "my reaction, why did you give it to the Blacks? Why not to an Asian?" (Lines 11-12). First, these utterances indicate that Alf and other members of the AACC know Jasmine Jackson. Alf does not provide background information about Jasmine, but all participants (aside from me) seemed to be aware that Jasmine is an African American woman business owner. Second, this utterance illustrates how Alf orients to both organizational norms and norms for

addressing racial categories in his construction of the "Black" and "Asian" identity categories. Since these contracts are awarded according to U.S. legal definitions of "women- and minority-owned businesses," Alf is using the racial categories "Black" and "Asian" which reflect the United States' system of racial classification and simultaneously reproduces this system as relevant to professional identities in the Big City business community. Furthermore, Alf is invoking essentialist assumptions about racial identity, implying that since the new flight is to Shanghai and Hong Kong, which are "Asian" cities, that an "Asian" company would naturally be a better choice to win the contract.

Alf then expands on the definition of the identity category "Asian" by adding a category-bound activity: "there was no Asian firm submitted" (Line 12). Alf lists several members of the AACC that did not apply for the contract. This utterance indexes shared knowledge among Alf's audience: Asians do not apply for government contracts. In my first interview with Alf, he explained that most members of the Asian chamber come from communist or dictatorship countries (he used China and Vietnam as examples) and therefore are reluctant to work with the government-affiliated organizations in the United States. However, in the United States, there are systems that encourage minority participation in the workforce, and part of what Alf does as the president of the AACC is to push Asian businesses to apply for government contracts. The Big City airport is technically owned by Big City and a neighboring city, and therefore is seen as being closely affiliated with government. Thus, even though Alf is upset that "the Blacks" received the airport contract, he attributes this to the fact that "Asians" are not yet acculturated into American ways of doing business and therefore do not apply for contracts.

Clara interjects (Line 14) in Alf's story and redirects the conversation toward professional non-raced talk when asking specifically about what the winning company needs to plan. Clara's question (Line 14) functions to mark her own identity category as the marketing director who is meeting with another business woman, Ariana. Alf has not made the connection between Clara's meeting and his narrative yet, so Clara's utterance functions to guide Alf's story

toward a topic more relevant to her future meeting. Alf explains that the winning company is planning celebrations leading up to the first direct flight (Line 17) and then clarifies that Ariana is involved with planning these events. Alf uses the identity category "big" to describe Jasmine's company and the identity category "helper" to describe Ariana's company. Alf, therefore is creating a team among the "big" and "helper" professional identities (Stokoe, 2012). Alf's use of these identity categories indexes a commonly understood phenomenon in the business world: Large companies are given contracts and then offer subcontracts to smaller companies to take care of different parts of larger projects. Jasmine's company is "big" and has hired Ariana's company to "do the specifics." Clara replies to Alf throughout his explanation (e.g., "oh okay," Line 19; "right," Line 22), indicating that she understands how her meeting with Ariana is connected to Alf's story about Jasmine Jackson and the airport contract.

Alf uses another discourse marker, "now" (Line 23) to indicate that he will share what he "discovered" (Line 23). Alf first reiterates that Jasmine is "Black" (Line 19) in a whispered tone that Clara laughs softly at and then whispers to Candace, the AACC Black female employee sitting next to Clara (Line 24). Alf has directly stated that "the Blacks" did not deserve to win the contract and "an Asian" should have won it instead in front of Candace, a "Black" woman working for an "Asian" chamber. Thus, Alf's utterances about "Black" and "Asian" identity categories in the narrated event could be seen indexing differences between Candace from the other Asian participants in the current interaction. In laughing softly and whispering about Alf's repeated characterization of Jasmine as "Black" to Candace, Clara is orienting to Alf's communication practices as funny. Clara is diffusing a potentially problematic and uncomfortable situation by positioning Alf's communication practices as something silly deserving laughter rather than something problematic and divisive.

Alf then completes his discovery adding yet another identity category for Jasmine: "but Filipina" (Line 25). Alf's use of the contraction "but" indexes commonsense notions that racial categories are distinctive, and therefore someone who is Black cannot also be Filipina. Thus, Alf

is voicing Jasmine as constructing a "category-activity puzzle," where she can "do particular actions" (e.g., mark herself as qualified for a contract) "by putting together (un)expected combinations" (e.g., Black and Filipina; Stokoe, 2012, p. 281). After this revelation, multiple other participants collaborate in providing evaluations. Clara, by laughing loudly and then saying "Alf" is indicating that she is not laughing at the "discovery" but at Alf. Because Jasmine is Filipina, in Alf's eyes, she is redeemed as a viable candidate for the contract, and this is funny to Clara. Alf is Filipino as well, which adds to the humor of this discovery because despite Alf's objections, Jasmine does turn out to be Asian, and not just any Asian, but affiliated with the same country as Alf. Candace collaborates in this evaluation, adding "see there you go" (Line 27), using the pronoun "you" to indicate that now Alf in particular can stop being "critical" about why "the Blacks" won the contract. Both Clara and Candace, thus, evaluate this discovery not as interesting in general but as something that is interesting to Alf.

Alf continues his narrative by explaining how he found out about Jasmine's identity, using reported speech: "I am Jasmine Jackson. I am a Filipina and I blah blah blah" (Line 30). Using "blah, blah, blah," indicates that, to Alf, the point of this story is about Jasmine's Filipina identity and not about any of the other qualifications she might have explained at the panel. Alf then narrates his reaction to this discovery. Alf has shifted from being "critical" to being amazed ("what I said who↑oo?"). Grace laughs at Alf's amazement (Line 32). Then, Alf names a category-bound activity for Jasmine, "she'll probably get it" (Line 33), and links the activity of receiving a contract to new identity categories: "African American Asian minority" (Line 33). Here, Alf is invoking proper classifications of minorities (e.g., using African American instead of Black, using Asian instead of Filipina, adding the word "minority") to describe Jasmine as someone who fulfills official minority requirements for the contract. Furthermore, Alf is positioning Jasmine as more qualified to receive a contract because she is African American *and* Asian.

The group members display their understanding of Alf's argument by collaborating in providing "woman" as another identity category (Lines 34-36) that provides Jasmine an advantage, and then all group members display their understanding that these categories together make Jasmine a stronger *professional* candidate for the contract, using the identity categories of "triple minority," "triple threat," "triple criteria" (Lines 36-38). Everyone laughs at the oddity of Jasmine being able to fulfill three minority identity categories, especially since they find it uncommon that someone can be both Black and Asian, and how Jasmine uses her "triple minority" status to win the airport contract. This talk indexes AACC staff members' shared knowledge about minority identification and how it matters for the professional identities of members in the minority business community. Furthermore, the fact that Jasmine Jackson emphasized her Asian heritage indicates that she too is aware that this is an "Asian" contract that will most likely be given to an "Asian"-owned business.

The use of multiple racial and nonracial professional identity categories throughout this excerpt illustrates how AACC members construct race as a professional identity category in their organizational world. During a staff meeting, Alf tells a narrative that links the racial identification of a business owner, the airport's minority contract policies, and the process of awarding a contract to a business as all being relevant to AACC business practices. Other AACC staff members are also aware of these policies, which is why they are able to understand Alf's concern about why a "Black" would receive an "Asian" contract and are able to participate in characterizing Jasmine as a "triple minority" according to U.S. systems of classification for "minority" identities.

The AACC's main goal is to be aware of minority policies and to push their members into taking advantage of opportunities given to minority-owned businesses. Therefore, being aware of racial identification of AACC members and of other companies that compete for minority contracts is important and often overtly discussed. Furthermore, decisions that corporations, such as the airport, make about who receives a contract are often evaluated using

ethnic and racial criteria in conjunction with someone's professional qualifications (i.e., size of business, and professional experience). Jasmine's utterances (as constructed by Alf), while they challenge dominant ideologies about race by constructing a non-normative racial identity (Black but Filipina), simultaneously illustrate how business professionals creatively construct their racial identities to fit the implicit norm that an "Asian" company should get an "Asian" contract. Thus, this excerpt illustrates the centrality of racial and ethnic identification to someone's professional identity in the Texas business minority community.

2. **"You Will Do Business with Your Friends": "Members" and "Visitors" in the NCC**

This second audio-recorded example illustrates how utterances in the NCC, unlike in the AACC, use identity categories that emphasize group similarities. The utterances from the following excerpt function to socialize "visitors" (those who are not NCC members) into NCC's organizational communication norms for interaction, norms taken for granted and practiced by NCC members. These norms for interaction include norms for constructing relevant professional identities in the NCC. Unlike in the previous excerpt, where norms about AACC professional identities were illustrated through the collaborative construction of identities by the staff members, in this excerpt, norms are explicitly communicated by an experienced member of the NCC to newer "visitors".

These utterances constitute a particular NCC speech event: the Leads Program. Members and potential members of the NCC attend this networking event to meet other business professionals (e.g., "leads") so they can widen their business network. Events that facilitate networking among North City–based business professionals are what NCC members claim to be central to their organizational culture, unlike AACC members who do hold some networking events but mostly focus on doing advocacy work for their minority members. The Leads Program occurs twice per month and begins with lunch after which members of the "leads group," who are volunteers at the NCC, introduce the event. In the event, each person provides a "30-second commercial" for his or her company, and these commercials are followed by a 10-minute

presentation from the event's sponsor. The event closes with the volunteers giving out prizes and with informal networking, where attendees can speak to one another and make connections.

The following excerpt is from the beginning of the Leads Program where one of the NCC volunteers is explaining the purpose of the event, rules for attending the event, and why this particular event and membership in the NCC is beneficial. The speaker, Angela, is a White, middle-aged woman who has been a member of the NCC for several decades and often acts as a volunteer and organizer of NCC events. There are about 20 attendees, most of whom are White men and women. There are a total of three ethnic minority attendees (other than myself), and all of them are African American women. This event is considered to be an introductory event to the NCC and is often a place where the NCC acquires new members.

Example 2.2
1	Angela	Also another thing that we don't discuss often enough I think (.) is that this is a
2		North City Chamber event (.) ^{0}obviously^0. (1.0) We do want visitors. We want
3		people to come (.) and visit (.) and see what a great group we <u>are</u> cuz growth is, is
4		very important to this to this (.) organization. To North City Chamber and to the
5		Leads Group. <u>But</u> you just get to come (.) <u>twi:ce</u> a:s a visitor and not a member of
6		the North City Chamber. After that we want you to join the chamber, join (.) our
7		group of friends (.) and learn all that you can learn and get involved at the North
8		City Chamber. Believe me. You can learn a <u>lot</u> through this chamber. A <u>whole</u> lot.
9		You can meet a <u>lot</u> of great people. You will do business with your friends.
10		

Angela uses the pronoun "we" (Line 1) to introduce the first relevant identity category. Angela uses the "conversation we" (Dori-Hacohen, 2014) to refer to participants in the current interaction (including herself) and characterize the participants with the category-bound activity of "don't discuss" (Line 1). Angela then uses "I think" (Line 1) to position the upcoming utterance clarifying what "we don't discuss" as her own opinion. Angela then associates "we" and the "event" with the "North City Chamber" (2:2). Here, Angela is clarifying that while the "Leads Group" organized the event, the "Leads Group" is a committee of the North City Chamber and therefore the "event" is associated with the "North City Chamber." Angela adds "obviously" (2:2) most likely because the event is taking place in the NCC building and has also

been advertised as an NCC event. By associating the "event" with the NCC, Angela is now tying "we" not only to members of the Leads Group but also to members of the North City Chamber.

Angela's next use of "we" refers to people who are associated with the Leads Group and the chamber and is a delimited social "we' (Dori-Hacohen, 2014) that divides the current attendees into two groups: "we" who organized the event and everyone else who are not event organizers. Angela adds the category-bound activity "we do want visitors" (Line 2). In doing so, Angela now names those who are not a part of the "we" in a separate identity category "visitors." Angela then constructs "we" and "visitors" as a standardized relational pair who has "obligations in relation to one another" (Stokoe, 2012, p. 281). "We" are an identity category who is welcoming of visitors (we "want" them) and "visitors" are "people" who "come (.) and visit (.) and see what a great group we are"(Line 3). Angela then provides an additional account explaining why visitors should visit and in doing so, Angela adds another identity category that expands on her definition of "we": "this organization" (Lines 3-4). Visitors are not only important because "we want" them but also because "growth is very important to this organization" (Lines 3-4). Angela explicitly ties "we" to the NCC organization and its goals. Angela continues by clarifying the difference between "visitors" and a newly introduced identity category: "members." Angela constructs "visitors" and "members" as "positioned categories" that "occupy a hierarchical relationship" (Stokoe, 2012, p. 281). As a visitor, "you just get to come twice," while members "join the chamber" and therefore can attend events as many times as they wish (Lines 6-7).

Furthermore, people who "join" the chamber also get to become "friends" with others who have joined the chamber (Lines 6-7). "Friends" (people who are members of the chamber) have the advantage to "learn all that you can learn and get involved at the North City Chamber" (Lines 7-8). Angela then uses the pronoun "me" (Line 8) to shift from speaking on behalf of the Leads Group to speaking about her personal experience as a member (and subsequently "friend") of the chamber. She emphasizes that members learn "a whole lot" and "meet a lot of great

people" (Line 9). Furthermore, if visitors ("you"), become a member, "you will do business with your friends" (Lines 9-10).

Throughout this excerpt, Angela creates two hierarchically organized identities: those who are members of the chamber and those who are not. Members of the organization are described using the identity categories "we," "this organization," "members," "friends," "me," and "great people." Nonmembers are described using the identity categories "visitors" and "you." While members have many advantages (e.g., attending events, learning from others, getting involved, doing business with friends), visitors are only allowed to attend this event twice and cannot reap the benefits of being connected with "this organization" and the "friends" who are its "members." The identity categories Angela uses to socialize the visitors reflect and reproduce a particular reality for the NCC organization: Identities of organizational membership do not include orientation to ethnic, gender, or other differences in social identity.

I also argue that these practices have become implicitly associated with the White identity category. While NCC members would not characterize themselves as a "White" chamber, other minority-identified members of the business community—not members of the NCC but people familiar with their organization—to whom I spoke during my fieldwork did characterize the NCC as White because all the NCC board members have been White and because "North City" is popularly recognized as the "White" part of Big City. Furthermore, unlike organizations like the AACC, the NCC does not have events where they discuss resources for minority- and women-owned businesses. Thus, although the identity categories "we," "visitors," "members," and "friends" do not explicitly address Whiteness, these ways of speaking seem to have become ideologically associated with the White racial identity category and reproduce ideologies about Whiteness as "unmarked," "racially normative" and "invisible compared to all other racial categories" (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 15). This phenomenon, where differing ways of speaking become associated "with 'typical' persons" who tend to speak that way, has been recognized in other contexts (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 36). Thus, NCC's "North City" identity, mostly White

membership, and organizational goals contribute to their particular ways of speaking being characterized as "White" and their particular way of speaking thus becomes implicitly read as a "White" way of speaking and therefore inadvertently constructs the NCC as a "White" chamber of commerce.

3. "We Don't Ask That Question": Not Talking About Race in the NCC

In this section, I discuss a segment of talk in which ethnic and racial categories is explicitly brought up by a board member of the NCC and immediately dismissed by the staff members as an identity not relevant to the NCC organization. The example below illustrates that the avoidance of using ethnic and racial identity categories is deliberate and counters the notion that race simply "does not come up" because most NCC members happen to be all of one race (White). The following excerpt is from a meeting among the NCC staff and one board member, whom I call Susan. Susan has specifically called the meeting because she wanted to discuss ideas for increasing membership in the NCC. She starts the meeting by stating that she wants to know what "industries" make up the chamber's membership. After going through categories of "big" and "small" members (i.e., large and small companies), Susan (a White female) asks about the number of minority- and women-owned businesses who are members of the chamber.

The following analysis illustrates how participants orient to and evaluate the "minority- and women-owned businesses" category in multiple differing ways, ultimately drawing on and reproducing ideologies of colorblindness. The participants in this interaction are all White Texans and include Eileen, the NCC Senior Vice President, Brian, the Director of Membership, Frank, the President and CEO, and Katy, the Director of Information Technology.

Example 2.3
```
1    Board Mbr    And then I wondered (.) um (.) minority and women-owned businesses=
2    Eileen       =We don't ask that ques[tion
3    Brian                               [We (.) never tracked that
4    Board Mbr    Never [tracked
5    Katy              [m-mm
6    Frank             [Yeah   We'd have to [make (.) some assumptions
7    Brian                                 [There's there's a        lot of
                  historical things that you're ss (.) talking about which are great
```

8	Board Mbr	Yeah
9	Brian	that we've never really (.) tracked for whatever reason ahh size of
10		companies yes. *Continued talk about company size – no more mention of minority businesses*

Susan starts by hedging (Kaltenböck, 2010), using the utterances "and then I wondered" and "um" (Line 1). Speakers often hedge to reduce "the risk a speaker runs when uttering a strong or firm assertion or other speech act" (p. 1). This hedging indicates that Susan sees asking about "minority- and women-owned businesses" as a risk, something not normally done and therefore something that requires hedging and cannot be directly addressed. Thus, the identity category, "minority- and women-owned businesses" (Line 1) is implicitly evaluated by Susan as something not usually discussed in the NCC. Furthermore, the use of "minority- and women-owned businesses" reflects the popular and U.S. federal government programs/Big City– sanctioned label for businesses owned by ethnic minorities and/or by women.

Immediately after Susan mentions the "minority- and women-owned businesses" identity category, thus overtly referring to ethnic and gender identities, Eileen and Brian provide accounts (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990), or explanations that accompany dispreferred responses, about why they do not have information about "minority- and women-owned business" members. Eileen's account orients to "minority- and women-owned businesses" as an identity category asked about in a membership application and states that the NCC does not ask "that question" (Line 2). Brian, the membership director, illustrates a similar interpretation of the term when he characterizes "minority-and women-owned businesses" as a type of business that the NCC "never tracked" (presumably through membership forms; Line 4). Both of these accounts position "minority- and women-owned businesses" as an identity category not relevant to the NCC professional identities.

Susan repeats Brian's statement "never tracked," using it as a formulation or a summary of what Susan takes to be the gist of Eileen and Brian's responses (Heritage & Watson, 1979). Furthermore, this formulation is phrased as a question, therefore acting as a rejection of the staff members' accounts. By repeating their account for not having the information in the form of a

question, Susan shows she needs further explanation about why this information was not collected. Not collecting information is not a good account for not having information, since the information can still be collected. Susan's rejection of the staff members' accounts is especially important to the staff members because Susan is a board member, and board members outrank staff members at chambers of commerce. Board members hire staff members to run the chamber and board member companies contribute the majority of money to the chamber.

Therefore, Frank, the president and CEO of the chamber, provides an account as to why it would be difficult for the staff to provide this information: "We'd have to make some assumptions" (Line 6). Frank does not offer to try and collect these data from NCC members but rather states that the only way that staff members could provide these data would be by making "assumptions," which may or may not be accurate and therefore data cannot be provided. As illustrated in the earlier excerpt from AACC talk, minority-owned businesses are identifiable because they can be officially and legally "minority-certified." Therefore collecting an accurate count of how many businesses are "minority-certified" is possible, but the idea is rejected by Frank. Brian then positions "minority- and women-owned businesses" as one of many "historical" categories (Line 8) alongside "size of companies" (Line 10).

Here, Brian is using "historical" to refer to the differing categories of membership mentioned by Susan that the NCC may or may not have tracked throughout the years. Furthermore, "historical" is often a term used by White Americans to discuss racial issues – it implies that these issues are important because of "history" but are not necessarily relevant in the present, thus reflecting dominant ideologies that the United States is post-racial (e.g., race no longer matters). Brian constructs an agreement plus disagreement structure (Pomerantz, 1984), agreeing with Susan that "talking about" these categories is "great" (Line 8), to which Susan replies "Yeah" (Line 9) with a rising intonation, indicating that she is listening for further explanation. Brian continues with the "disagreement" part of the structure, stating that "we" (the chamber staff) have "never really tracked that for whatever reason" (Line 10), thus dismissing the

"minority- and women-owned business" category in particular as something not relevant to the NCC professional identities.

Brian then immediately changes the subject back to discussing the other category Susan mentioned, "size of companies" (Line 10), for which the NCC does collect information, thereby indicating that size of companies is relevant to NCC professional identities. The conversation continues with input from other members about how the size of businesses is tracked and the topic of "minority- and women-owned businesses" is never mentioned again.

The analysis of the multiple ways that NCC members orient to the identity category "minority- and women-owned business" illustrates how the NCC avoids explicit construction of racial and/or gender identity categories as relevant for their organization. Susan is hesitant in asking about "minority- and women-owned businesses," which suggests that this topic is not usually talked about among NCC members, and when she does ask, the NCC staff members responses indicate their shared understanding that talking about "minority- and women-owned businesses" is not usually done. Staff members characterize the "minority- and women-owned business" category as a question that was not asked, as information that was not tracked, as information that staff members do not track and cannot "assume," and as great to talk about but not necessary to track. This analysis illustrates how NCC members are being actively colormute (Pollack, 2004). They are condemning the mention of racial categories not only in naturally occurring interactions but also in their official documents used to track membership, thus indicating that racial, ethnic, and gender identity categories are not important for NCC professional identities. The norm in the NCC organizational communication, in opposition to the AACC, is to *not* talk about racial and gender difference as relevant to professional identities in the NCC.

B. Conclusions

This analysis sheds light on the differing membership categories that each organization orients to as being encompassed within their overarching professional membership categorization

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device. In the AACC, racial categories (e.g., "Black," "Asian," "Filipina," and "minority") are explicitly included in the professional identity device. The way the AACC addresses race, however, is constrained by the organizational context. Race is not talked about as a sociohistorical category where people are trying to "fight oppression" but rather as a practical, economic category legally defined by federal definitions of "race." In the NCC, identity categories that emphasize in group similarity (e.g., "we," "visitors," "members," and "friends") are explicitly included in the professional identity device. Implicitly, however, the NCC is also constructing the White racial identity category as being relevant to their professional identities.

They do so by engaging in discourses of colorblindness, avoiding the acknowledgment of racial categories in their talk, in their membership forms, and in their organizational goals. Furthermore, the White racial makeup of their organization and their location in the more prosperous part of Big City locally associated with being White contribute to the NCC's positioning as a White chamber. By studying an explicitly non-White context, this study decenters the normative, assumed Whiteness, and is able to illustrate how a White racial identity might implicitly constructed by NCC members' organizational communication practices. Thus, this study illustrates how professional identity categories in both chambers are bound up in and inseparable from racial identity.

This analysis also speaks to the ways that AACC and NCC communication practices may contribute to reproducing racial hierarchies in the Big City, Texas, business community. The AACC, in overtly talking about race, is using U.S. histories of racial classification to promote the advancement of members in their business community. However, interactions among AACC members also reproduce already existing structures of racial organization in the United States that segregate "White" and "minority" businesses, and these structures often do not help eliminate inequalities between White and minority racial groups (Sweet, 2006). The NCC is practicing colorblindness, which is critiqued by critical race scholars because "colorblindness treats as acceptable the existing unequal distribution of social resources and weakens efforts to redistribute

social resources in a more egalitarian fashion" (Hutchinson, 2002, p. 1457). In other words, by characterizing racial identity as irrelevant to professional identities, the NCC is ignoring racial inequality in the business community. Thus, while the NCC members do not talk about race in an effort to be inclusive, they inadvertently reproduce inequality between White and minority-owned businesses.

Overall, these two organizations are acting within a system that divides minority and nonminority businesses, and by focusing on working within this preexisting system to gain economic profit, these organizations are reproducing the existing racial organization of businesses in Big City, Texas, that privileges "Whiteness" as the dominant, unmarked professional identity.

CHAPTER 3

"WELL WITH THE ASIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, IT'S VERY CULTURALLY DIVERSE": COMMUNICATION AND ASIAN AMERICAN PANETHNICITY

In this chapter, I investigate the role that everyday communication practices of AACC members, or "self ascription", plays in negotiating an Asian American panethnic identity. Panethnicity is defined as "the construction of a new categorical boundary through the consolidation of ethnic, tribal, religious, or national groups", often for purposes of political empowerment (Okamoto & Mora, 2014, p. 221). Examples of panethnic groups in the United States include Asian Americans (Espiritu, 1992; Liu, Geron, & Lai, 2008; Okamoto, 2003, Omi, 1999), Latino Americans (Mora, 2014; Padilla, 1985), and Native Americans (Cornell & Kalt, 1988; Nagel, 1995). These groups formed panethnic organizations during the US Civil Rights movements in the 1960s because they were often treated as homogenous by outsiders and faced similar forms of discrimination. Thus, the shift from ethnic identities to recognizable panethnic labels– e.g., Japanese to Asian, Mexican to Latino, and Cherokee to American Indian – seemed like a common sense way to form institutions that support and empower these groups.

There are two challenges faced by panethnic organizations. First, internally, members face difficulties in maintaining a singular, panethnic group because of tensions between "subgroup diversity" and "a broader sense of solidarity" (Okamoto & Mora, 2014, p. 221; See also: Espiritu, 1992; Mora, 2014, Omi, 1999). Second, while adopting a panethnic identity does in some ways empower panethnic groups, it also "willingly accepts the terms of the dominant logic that organizes the heterogeneous picture of racial and ethnic diversity into a binary schema of "the one" and "the other (Lowe, 2005, p. 261). In other words, by marking themselves as 'non-White' through their participation in panethnic organizations, minorities reproduce the White vs non-White binary system that privileges members who count as "White" and marginalizes members who count as 'non-White'. Scholars who study panethnicity investigate these tensions through examining how "structural conditions such as state classification schemes…as well as

cultural narratives created and reinforced by organizations, community leaders, and the media"

contribute to the formation, maintenance, and empowerment of panethnic groups (Okamoto &

Mora, 2014, p. 225).

In this chapter, I focus on how everyday communication practices of AACC members

address tensions between diversity and solidarity and between empowerment and

marginalization. Analysis in this chapter focuses on communication practices by members of the

Asian American Chamber of Commerce, and the following chapter focuses on how outsiders'

communication practices, or ascription by others, negotiate these same tensions. Studying Asian

American identity formation in the current sociocultural context helps investigate tensions

between diversity and solidarity primarily because "Asian American" is largely perceived as a

common sense single racial category, yet many members of the Asian American group are

immigrants who still have strong ties to their separate national, cultural, and linguistic identities.

Furthermore, Asian Americans, as a relatively newer and rapidly growing American racial group,

provide a current day example of how multiple ethnic groups use panethnicity to negotiate their

position in US racial hierarchies.

A. Communication and the Negotiation of Panethnic Identity

I investigate tensions between in group solidarity and diversity through examining how

communication practices construct multiple, locally situated identities that negotiate Asian

American identity, similar to other discursive studies that examine how Asian American identity

is situationally negotiated (e.g., Chun, 2001; Lo, 1999; Reyes, 2004, 2012; Reyes & Lo, 2009;

Shankar, 2008, Shrikant, 2015). AACC members index intra-Asian diversity through

codeswitching (Gumperz, 1982) into different languages and through explicitly mentioning

identity categories (e.g., Filipino, Cambodian, Thai) that constitute an Asian identity category. On

the other hand, some AACC communication practices – such as the use of "we" as an index for

the whole "Asian" organization, the use of standard English as lingua franca during most

interactions, and the use of the "Asian" identity category itself – function to erase intragroup

differences (Irvine & Gal, 2000). Through these practices, AACC members construct an Asian *American* identity, a racial identity marked by using one language and one identity category that "may be imagined as homogenous" (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 38). In these instances, members do *not* foreground intra-group *Asian* differences in nationality, ethnicity, and language that would disrupt the ideology that positions Asian Americans as a homogenous group. This shifting among different identity categories in different contexts for different purposes has been labeled by panethnic scholars as 'ethnic switching' (Espiritu, 1992), and has only been studied on a macro-level (e.g., tracking shifts in identity from tribal origin to American Indian on the census, Nagel 1995). This chapter examines how ethnic switching occurs in day to day experiences through analysis of AACC communication practices.

I also examine how these communication practices shape or are shaped by AACC organizational goals (Heritage, 1995) and by ideologies about Asian identity. Most AACC member practices creatively invoke racial categories to fulfill organizational goals. These goals include gaining recognition as a prominent ethnic group and organization in this community, supporting the development of Asian businesses in the Big City community, making money for their chamber of commerce, and building networks with other organizations.

AACC communication practices reflect and negotiate one main ideology about Asian Americans: Asian Americans "are often seen as a single group according to widely circulating American ideologies of race" (Lo & Reyes, 2009, p. 4). While this does have some negative consequences for the group (e.g., internal diversity is ignored, group members are othered) (Lowe, 2005), AACC member communication practices draw upon this ideology as a way to *empower* Asian Americans. For example, members foreground an "Asian" identity to public audiences "to identify themselves in terms intelligible to outsiders" (Espiritu, 1992, p. 10) as a noteworthy panethnic organization. Despite the fact that Asians are only 3% of the Big City population (Hispanics are 43% and Blacks are 25%), because they formed a panethnic organization and are able to publicly discuss their economic contributions to the Big City

community, they position themselves as a recognizable and important racially identified organization in Big City. Furthermore, even though Asian Americans are largely seen as a single group, many people are aware of different types of Asians, and the differing nationalities or ethnicities that might constitute an Asian identity (e.g., Korean, Chinese, Filipino). Therefore, in addition to foregrounding an Asian identity, AACC members also acknowledge multiple ethnic identities that constitute the Asian identity in a way that meets organizational goals. In other words, AACC members use their knowledge about who commonly 'counts' as Asian and their knowledge about their own intra-organizational diversity to meet organizational goals.

Below I present two sets of examples that illustrate how AACC members negotiate and maintain an Asian American panethnic identity through their everyday practices. First I present examples of 'internal talk' are talk among Asian Chamber members. This talk illustrates how chamber members invoke diversity as a defining quality of their organization through joking about the diversity of their membership. Second, I present three examples that illustrate the various ways Asian Chamber members present their identities to outsiders. Chamber members participate in 'ethnic switching' (Espiritu, 1992), or switching among different racial and ethnic identities, depending on their organizational goals. These examples illustrate how members of the Asian chamber at times invoke an Asian American identity, at times deny this identity, and at times replace the Asian American identity with various ethnic identities that constitute it.

1.   Joking through code-switching: "There are twenty four languages"

The following example illustrates how joking about group members' diversity through code-switching is a way that group members negotiate tensions between diversity and solidarity. Asian American Chamber board members codeswitch (Gumperz, 1982) into different languages and discuss diversity among their membership, and they primarily use English as a lingua-franca among the groups when engaging in formal business talk. The following example is an excerpt from the Asian Chamber board meeting. Tables were arranged in a large square shape in a conference room. Board members sat around the square. Ghalib, the Chair of the Board, Alf, the

president of the chamber, and other officers of the board sat along one side of the square and addressed the rest of the board. Other chamber staff members and I sat in chairs along the wall surrounding the board members.

Board meetings are held monthly, and board members discuss the financial status of the chamber, any new events and initiatives, changes to membership fees, and other topics that most businesses might discuss during a board meeting. Asian Chamber board meetings take place after the work day so board members can attend the meeting after their jobs. The Asian chamber provides dinner and tea, and a board member known for her baking usually brings a cake. Board members and staff members eat and socialize for the first half hour, and then the chair of the board calls the meeting to order.

Example 3.1

1	Ghalib	Achtung Achtung. That is, may I have your attention (.) in German
2		language. Achtung Achtung.
3	Multiple	*Laughter from some, small talk among the group* (10 seconds)
4	Ghalib	Attention Attention. French: Attention Attention *(speaks in french)*
5	Multiple	*laughter from some, others continue small talk*
6	Ghalib	Attention Attention (*in French*).
7		*small talk for 4 seconds*
8	Board Member 1	Mr. Chairman you have our attention
9	Ghalib	*Makes eye contact and smiles at Board Member 1*
10	Others	*small talk for 4 seconds*
11	Board Member 2	Atención Atención *(Speaking Spanish)*
12	Ghalib	Achaa, Spanish (*Achaa = Urdu for "very good"*)
13	Board Member 2	Vámanos, vamos a hablar en español.
14		*(let's get started, we are going to speak in spanish)*
15	Board Member 3	What about Chinese, Japanese, and Korean
16	Multiple	*((laughter))*
17	Ghalib	You see that's the biggest mistake. We started with one language and
18		there are twenty four languages (*(gesturing around the table)*)

Ghalib, who is a Pakistani immigrant and the chair of the board for the AACC, starts the meeting by using the German word for 'attention', "Achtung", and then explains to the fellow board members that "Achtung" is German for "may I have your attention" (line 1). Some board members laugh at this strange way to begin a meeting. In starting this meeting, Ghalib is not using a lingua franca (or a shared language). Ghalib is not German, and none of the board members are German or speak German. Other board members continue eating and talking to one

another. Ghalib's utterance does not function to start the meeting, as evidenced by the ten seconds of continued small talk after his announcement.

Ghalib then attempts to start the board meeting again and says "Attention, Attention" in English. He announces that he will now call attention "in French", and then says "Attention, Attention" in French (line 4). Ghalib repeats "Attention" in French, while others continue to engage in small talk. Then, Board Member 1 acknowledges Ghalib's attempts to call attention ("Mr. Chairman you have our attention", line 8). Board Member 1 is speaking in ways ideologically associated with American business meeting talk by using titles like "Mr. Chairman" and speaking Standard English. However, Board Member 1 is saying this in jest. Ghalib has attempted multiple times to start the meeting and has been ignored by the board members, who continue to engage in small talk. Even as Board Member 1 is stating that Ghalib has "our" (the board members') attention, all the other board members are continuing speaking with one another. Thus, this board member is able to joke with Ghalib about how Ghalib's multilingual calls to attention are not meeting his goal as Chairman to start the meeting. Ghalib non-verbally acknowledges Board Member 1's joke by making eye contact and smiling (line 9).

Following more small talk, Board Member 2 decides to add a fourth language: Spanish (previously there was German, English, and French) (line 11). Ghalib recognizes the use of Spanish with the word "Achaa", an Urdu word loosely meaning "very good" and then says "Spanish", identifying that language the board member is speaking. Urdu is one of Pakistan's national languages and Ghalib's native language. Board Member 2 does not speak Urdu but is aware of this word's meaning because it is commonly used by Ghalib and other South Asian members of the Asian Chamber (Achaa is a word common among multiple South Asian languages that originate from Sanskrit). In saying "Achaa Spanish", Ghalib is 1) implicitly indexing his identity as a Pakistani by code-switching into his native language and 2) positively acknowledging and thus showing support for the board members' use of Spanish. Board member

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2's continued Spanish (line 13), can be characterized as her recognition of Ghalib's support for speaking Spanish during the Board Meeting.

Then Board Member 3 asks specifically about languages spoken by many of the board members: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (line 15). Until this point, Board Members, none of whom are European, are all speaking European-based languages. Thus, Board Member 3 points out that none of the native languages of the Board Members have been used to call attention and start the meeting. Board Member 3's utterance receives laughter from multiple people. Ghalib then acknowledges the diversity of languages spoken by people in the room and positions starting the meeting in one language as "the biggest mistake" because there are "twenty four languages" spoken by people in this room (lines 14-15). It is after this utterance that the meeting finally starts.

Here, multiple board members collaborate in enacting a multilingual identity for the Asian chamber through both speaking different languages and naming different languages. Ghalib attempts to start the meeting by using multiple languages to call attention (German, English, and French). Board members collaborate with Ghalib by speaking Spanish and naming Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages. Furthermore, Ghalib codeswitches into his native language, Urdu, when interacting with another board member's non-native Spanish. The uncharacteristic nature of this multilingual talk in a business board meeting is highlighted by the contrast between multilingualism and the 'professional talk' voiced by Board Member 1. Board Member 1's joke indicates that normative meeting talk should be characterized by speaking of Standard English and the use of professional identity categories (e.g., Mr. Chairman). Thus, even though board members are marking their diversity through code-switching into multiple languages, they do recognize what might be normative in other contexts and moving forward, they do use English as a lingua franca among the group and follow Roberts Rules of Order (e.g., reviewing old business, putting forth a motion to approve old business, saying 'ay' and 'naye', addressing Ghalib as "Mr. Chairman") throughout their board meeting.

Despite the fact that using multiple languages is ultimately positioned as appropriate for joking but not for the official conduct of business, incorporating multilingual talk for the purpose of joking does serve the institutional goals of the Asian chamber of commerce. Other studies about panethnicity find that "The maintenance of subgroup identities is necessary for the success and longevity of broader-based panethnic groups. Diversity is thus inherently a part of panethnicity," (Okamoto, 2014, p. 221). In this case, using multiple languages during a board meeting is not about celebrating culture (most languages used were not native languages of any of the speakers) but more so about maintaining an organization. In the Asian Chamber there are divisions among people who speak different languages or are from different countries. For example, Alf is Filipino and was chosen as the president of the chamber staff because he was open to working with different Asian people and did not push the interest of only Filipinos. The chairs of the board often alternate by nationality so members do not get upset that someone from the same country is always the Chair. Because in-group diversity is a major tension in this chamber of commerce, it also becomes a source of joking. Jokes often help to create harmony among group members in the face of differences. This multilingual joking, therefore, served to negotiate tensions between in-group diversity and pan-group solidarity and ultimately to maintain their organization.

2. Asians as culturally diverse: "We'll probably mess it all up"

While the previous example illustrated how AACC members use joking as a way to both acknowledge in group diversity and promote solidarity among diverse group members, the following example illustrates how Asian Chamber members position their cultural diversity in relation to hegemonic norms for conducting business. Chamber staff members explicitly characterize the AACC as "culturally diverse" and cite this cultural diversity as the reason that many chamber board members speak in ways that deviate from standard forms of business communication. Participants in this conversation include Clara, the marketing and events director from Indonesia, and Grace, the Vietnamese-American college student who works part time as the

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membership assistant, and me. This audio-recorded excerpt is from one of my first conversations

with Grace and Clara in the AACC office where they asked me about the focus of my

dissertation.

Example 3.2

1	Natasha:	I'm looking a:t (.) organizations and ho:w (.) everyday
2		communication at a workplace establishes a unique
3		organizational culture [(.)and so I'm looking at
4	Clara:	[Oh yeah, it's it's very (h)interesting here
5		he he he
6	All:	((laughter))
7	Grace:	We'll probably mess it all up just s(h)(h)o you=
8	Natasha:	=O:h, n↓o
9		
10	Clara	Well (.) with the Asian (.) Chamber of Commerce (.) it's very
11		culturally diverse
12	Natasha	Mhmm
13	Clara	So:: (.) um (.) all rules just goes out the door
14	Grace and Clara:	((laughter))

After being asked about the focus of my dissertation project, I explain to Grace and Clara

that I am looking at the relationship between "everyday communication at the workplace" and

"organizational culture" (lines 1-3). Both Clara and Grace orient to my utterance as something

deserving comment or explanation. Clara shows that she understands my project ("oh yeah", line

4) and then describes the communication and culture "here" (at the AACC) as "very interesting"

(line 5). Thus, Clara marks the communication in her workplace as out of the ordinary. Clara

laughs as she is characterizing the chamber's communication as "interesting", and Grace and I

join in her laughter (line 6).

Grace then explains Clara's joke, stating that "we" (the AACC) will "mess it all up" (line

7). Grace is characterizing AACC communication and organizational culture as something that

will "mess up" my dissertation. Grace's response to my explanation of my research project

reproduces popular meanings associated with "communication", that communication can be done

'well' or 'badly' and that there are 'good' and 'bad' consequences for 'good' and 'bad'

communication (Katriel & Philipsen, 1981). In this context, Grace's utterance indications that

there is "good" communication and "bad" communication, and this often correlates with a "good"

and "bad" organizational culture, respectively. Grace's response to my research interest indicates that there is an ideal standard of business communication which the AACC does not meet and therefore will "mess up" my study of "communication in the workplace". Her response can also be characterized as hegemonic, implicitly positioning Asian difference as a deficit of these chamber members.

After I reassure Grace that their chamber will not "mess up" my dissertation (O:h, n↓o, line 8), Clara adds an explanation to accompany Grace's and her own claims. Clara explicitly identifies their organization, the "Asian chamber of commerce" (line 9) and characterizes their organizational identity as being "culturally diverse" (line 10). Here, Clara is positioning Asians as one, locally tied group co-existing in one organization *but* is also acknowledging that this singular group is culturally diverse. Furthermore, by positioning the chamber as "culturally diverse" Clara is implicitly positioning the chamber as non-White.

Whiteness is ideologically associated with cultural absence (e.g., White people do not have a culture) (Bucholtz, 2011b). Furthermore, minority groups often use Whiteness as an "ideological pivot" (Trechter & Bucholtz, 2001, p. 4), or as a normal, neutral, identity against which they define their own identities. Clara's utterances reflect ideologies that imagine Whiteness as an identity devoid of culture and an identity against which minority identities can be positioned as being "culturally diverse". Thus, when she says that the Asian chamber is "culturally diverse", she is not only saying what the chamber is (culturally diverse) but also what it is not (White, absent of culture). Clara then explicitly positions a culturally diverse identity as negatively affecting professional communication practices: "all rules just goes out the door" (line 13). While the AACC does have shared sets of norms for communicating in their chamber, both Grace and Clara view these as not meeting ideal business standards and therefore characterize their chamber communication practices as not following any particular set of rules.

Later in this conversation, Clara and Grace provide some examples of "interesting" communication. Clara states that, "Asians say things that can be perceived as rude just because

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we're very efficient". Clara is specifically speaking about sending emails and how she learned that many of her emails sound "rude". Grace and Clara also collaborate in evaluating board members as asking them inappropriate questions (e.g., "How old are you? How come you look like a kid? How come you're not married?") and behaving in informal ways ("They'll come to your desk and be like what you are eating and they'll just start eating your food"). In some ways, Grace and Clara take pride in this culture. For example, Clara evaluates Asians as efficient, a positive trait. Both Clara and Grace laugh endearingly about Board Members and at other times have stated how the chamber is like a family because of these behaviors. However, Clara and Grace still evaluate these practices as non-normative business practices. Thus, "cultural diversity" causes chamber members to communicate and behave in rude, informal ways, ones that are not acceptable in the business community. However, taking pride in cultural diversity allows chamber members to use their diversity as common ground that underlies a shared chamber identity. These contradictions are similar to ones faced by other minority groups who struggle with tensions between conforming to normative ways of speaking to gain status in society and maintaining non-normative ways of speaking for purposes of ethnic pride and solidarity (Woolard, 1985).

3. Utilizing Asian: "Community Development" and "International work"

The previous examples illustrated some of the ways that AACC board members and staff members construct linguistic and cultural diversity as central to AACC organizational identity. The following examples illustrate how this diverse identity allows AACC members to participate in ethnic switching, or changing identities to fit organizational goals in differing contexts. In the following examples, chamber members switch among the panethnic identity, "Asian", and multiple ethnic identities that constitute the "Asian" identity (e.g., "Cambodian" or "Filipino") to meet their professional goals.

The following example illustrates how the president of the AACC, Alf, uses multiple, conflicting constructions of Asian identity in his construction of the AACC of a successful organization. The example is from the AACC's annual meeting, held once a year, and attended by

Big City's large corporations, local government officials, AACC members, and AACC board

members. The annual meeting was held during dinner (with dinner provided) in a large hotel

ballroom. There fifty round tables in the ballroom, with 4-8 people at each table. I set up my

video camera in the back corner of the room and, since there were extra seats, I sat at one of the

tables in the back. After eating dinner and watching dance performances from an Indian dance

group and a Chinese face mask changing dance artist, the secretary of the chamber introduced

Alf, and Alf spoke about the chamber's achievements during the past year. Alf's speech

represents how the AACC publicly presents its organizational identity and publicly constructs

Asian-ness as being relevant to their organizational identity. Below is an excerpt from Alf's

speech describing the AACC's accomplishments.

Example 3.3
```
1       Alf:    We continue to support the initiatives and projects in the Asian trade district.
2               This is our-part of our community development work.
3               (referring to PowerPoint) There you go, there's the Asian trade district there.
4               We also support initiatives on international work by hosting delegations. We
5               had several delegations last year from Vietnam (.) from China (.) Russia (.)
6               from Mexico (.) and of course (.) from Korea.
```

Alf starts by using the pronoun "we" as an index for the AACC and then characterizes the

AACC as "supporting" the "Asian trade district" (line 1). Here, Alf's utterances reflect and

reproduce essentialist ideologies that position Asians as a natural racial category and as a group

that feels naturally connected to one another because of inherent, shared qualities (e.g., the Asian

Chamber would, naturally, support the Asian Trade District). Furthermore, Alf positions the

activity of "supporting" the "Asian trade district" as the chamber's "community development

work" (line 2). One function of chambers of commerce is to support the economic development

of the local community. Therefore, in constructing the AACC as doing "community development

work", Alf is illustrating how the AACC utilizes its Asian identity (Asian businesses supporting

Asian businesses) to fulfill its organizational goals as a chamber of commerce that serves to

support Asian businesses and in doing so, to develop the local community.

Alf then uses the pronoun "we", again indexing the AACC, and this time constructs "we" as an identity that does "international work" (line 4). Alf clarifies that the chamber does international work by "hosting delegations" (line 4). A "delegation" is a group of business people who visit Big City with the purpose of seeing whether they would like to start a business in Big City or invest in existing Big City business projects. Therefore, by hosting delegations, the AACC fulfills its organizational goal to support the economic development of Big City. Alf then names the differing origins of delegations. Some delegations came from countries included in the federally defined Asian identity category (e.g., China, Vietnam, and Korea), while other countries (e.g., Russian – located in Asia but Russians are classified and popularly thought of as "White" and not "Asian" – and Mexico) are not. Thus, Alf's utterances use ideologies about Asians as diverse foreigners to reposition the Asian chamber as a prestigious organization that does "international work" with both "Asian" and non-Asian countries.

Overall, Alf uses ideologies about Asian identity as a resource to meet organizational goals. On the one hand, Alf's utterances reflect essentialist ideologies about race that position "Asian" as a natural racial category, as a group that inherently feels connected with one another and therefore supports one another's business ventures (e.g., the AACC supports the Asian Trade District). On the other hand, Alf connects his organization with doing "international work" by drawing on ideologies that position Asians as foreigners (Lo & Reyes, 2009) – which is especially effective because his organization is comprised of mostly immigrants. Both supporting the community and doing international work that brings money into the local community are in line with a chamber of commerce's professional goal to support local economic development.

4. Downplaying Asian: "We're not Asian primarily"

In contrast to previous excerpt, this example illustrates how AACC members de-emphasize their Asian identity rather than foregrounding it. The following example is an audio-recorded excerpt from a meeting between the AACC and Univisión. This meeting takes place around a small table in Clara's office. Participants in this meeting include Alf, Clara, Woo-jin

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(the director of membership), Cesar (the head of radio broadcast for Univisión, a Spanish language broadcasting company) and me.

The AACC wants to partner with Unvisión so Univisión can advertise for the AACC's main event, the Asian Festival, on their Spanish-language radio stations. In another conversation, Clara describes the Asian Festival as family friendly and located downtown (where many Hispanics live). Therefore, advertising the festival on Hispanic radio will help increase attendance at the Asian festival. Cesar is the newly hired head of radio broadcasting for Univisión and has just moved to Texas from Chicago. Cesar reached out for the meeting and during the meeting revealed that he wants to establish ties with local organizations and that in Chicago, he organized multiple multicultural events (e.g., soccer games between Polish and Mexican teams). Univisión and the AACC used to work together in Big City in the past, but due to changes in leadership this relationship fell through. Thus, both organizations have an interest in reviving this partnership.

Example 3.4
1	Alf	We're basically:: (.) we're not Asian (1.0) um (.)primarily=
2	Cesar	=exclusively
3	Alf	Yeah (.) because we have our foundation the ____ center
4	Cesar	Mhmm
5	Alf	the-they have mostly Hispanics
6	Cesar	Oh really
7	Alf	[Yeah that's why Univision
8	Clara	[See like if you see me and Alf (2.0) we're [also with the foundation (.) so
9	Cesar	[mmm
10	Alf	And in mult-they call it multi-ethnic because instead of [call
11	Cesar	[((inaudible))
12	Alf	Instead of calling little Asia
13	Cesar	which would make (.) my day now
14	Alf	We would call it multi-ethnic because we have more Hispanics
15	Cesar	mhmm
16	Clara	mhmm
17	Alf	And African-American, an:d what Asian and then Russians an:d hehe
18	Clara	Eastern Europeans=
19	Alf	=Eastern Europeans
20	Clara	And Africans yup

Alf starts by using the pronoun "we" to index the AACC and states that "we" are "not Asian" followed by a pause after which Alf and Cesar co-construct the Asian Chamber as not being "Asian" "primarily" and "exclusively". This can characterized as a collaborative turn

sequence (Lerner, 2004), one where the recipient, Cesar, completes the speaker's, Alf's, turn. Alf pauses after saying the word, "Asian", and Cesar collaborates with Alf by helping Alf complete his turn. Alf and Cesar think of words to complete the turn almost simultaneously: "primarily" and "exclusively". The use of "primarily" emphasizes that "Asian" is not the main identity affiliated with the chamber. The use of "exclusively" on the other hand, clarifies that although the Asian Chamber might be primarily "Asian", this does not mean that their organization "excludes" others. Alf's "yeah" following "exclusively" indicates that Alf accepts Cesar's characterization of the chamber as "Not Asian exclusively".

Here, both Alf and Cesar display their shared knowledge about relationships among different panethnic groups: organizations that identify as one panethnic group mostly work with members of that panethnic group. It is true that the Asian Chamber has mostly Asian members and that Univisión works with Hispanics. However, the Asian chamber does work with the Black and Hispanic chambers at times, invoking their shared 'racial minority' status. Furthermore, all businesses in this community, despite racial identification, want to expand networks and thus have to navigate tensions between preserving the panethnic identity upon which their organization is based and expanding this identity for purposes of networking in the broader business community. Both Cesar and Alf work with panethnic based organizations and are familiar with this balance, which is why they are able to collaborate on positioning the Asian chamber as not primarily, nor exclusively, Asian.

By positioning the chamber as not exclusively Asian, both Alf and Cesar can meet their goal of wanting to establish a partnership between Univisión and the Asian Chamber of Commerce. Alf then provides further clarification to prove his claim that the Asian chamber is not exclusively Asian by citing "our foundation" (line 3). The AACC is a non-profit organization and has started a multi-ethnic foundation which focuses on helping members of minority groups to start a business and provides resources for small, low income businesses to grow and expand.

Although the multi-ethnic foundation and the chamber are two separate organizations on paper, they do share staff members.

Alf states that "our foundation" (not the Chamber of Commerce) has "mostly Hispanics" (line 5). Here, Alf is using the pronoun "our" to connect the "Asian" chamber to the "foundation" and to the "Hispanic" identity. Alf uses the "Hispanic" identity to connect to Univisión, a Hispanic identified company. Cesar expresses surprise at this assertion ("Oh really", line 6). There is than an overlap between Alf and Clara in their responses to Cesar. Alf's response "Yeah that's why Univisión" (line 7) indexes Univisión's and the AACC's past relationship. These organizations worked together in the past because of a connection between Hispanics and Asians. Clara's utterance more specifically focuses on creating a personal connection between the foundation and the AACC by pointing out that both she and Alf work with the foundation in addition to the Chamber (line 8). Therefore, even though the purpose of this meeting was for Univisión and the Asian Chamber to establish a partnership, since the Foundation and the Chamber share staff members, Alf and Clara promote the Foundation as 1) a connection between Asians and Hispanics and 2) another way that Unvisión can establish a partnership if Unvisión is seeking to partner with a more Hispanic oriented organization.

Alf then re-emphasizes that the foundation is purposefully categorized as "multi-ethnic" and opposes this identity category to "little Asia" (lines 10-12). "Little Asia" is a term popularly used to characterize parts of town populated by mostly Asian people that have Asian grocery stores and sell Asian souvenirs. Alf is stating that the chamber *chose* a multiethnic identity ("they call it multiethnic because") for their foundation on purpose to emphasize that the chamber and foundation are not organizations that resemble a "little Asia" full of Asians and disconnected from the rest of the community. Alf then restates that "we" (the chamber) "would call it" (the foundation) "multiethnic" and follows this by using "we" again and characterizes "we" as having "more Hispanics". In this second use of we ("we have more Hispanics", line 14), Alf positions the chamber, the foundation, Alf, and Clara as all being a part of one "multiethnic" group. Alf

and Clara then collaborate in listing multiple identities that constitute a multiethnic identity, foregrounding "Hispanic" again to connect to Univisión and then listing multiple other ethnicities (lines 17-20).

In this excerpt, Alf engages in ethnic switching when he de-emphasizes the "Asian" identity as being relevant to AACC business practices and instead cites the AACC "multi-ethnic" foundation to expand the AACC's professional network. Alf and Clara draw connections between the AACC and the multi-ethnic foundation (e.g., the foundation belongs to the AACC, the foundation shares staff with the AACC) and uses this connection to construct the AACC as multi-ethnic as well. However, at the same time that Alf denies that being "Asian" identified marks the AACC as working exclusively with "Asians", Alf constructs Univisión as a "Hispanic" company that primarily works with "Hispanics". He does so by repeatedly foregrounding "Hispanic" as the main ethnicity that comprises membership of the multi-ethnic foundation (this is not true – the multi-ethnic foundation does have a number of Hispanics, but Hispanics do not outnumber the other ethnic groups that comprise the foundation's membership). Thus, in one sense, Alf denies racial identity as a prominent factor for conducting business, and in another sense, he foregrounds the Hispanic identity as a connection to a Hispanic company. Overall, Alf strategically incorporates racial and ethnic identities when characterizing the AACC, the foundation, and Univisión in order to meet the AACC's organizational goal to build a professional relationship with Univisión, and Cesar collaborates in this endeavor because he wants to do the same.

5. Replacing Asian: "Filipino", "Cambodian", and "Thai"

The following example illustrates how Clara implicitly orients to the "Asian" identity category as encompassing multiple, nationally tied identity categories. Clara uses her knowledge about intra-Asian difference and about different Asian groups living in the Big City Area to hire an Asian dance performance for a dinner event. The following is a conversation I had with Clara in her office.

Example 3.5

1	Clara	The Filipino dancers are <u>old</u> they're like (.) they don't have the young
2		generation dancing anymore. Alf always complains there's (hh) old
3		peo(h(h)ple on stage [((laughter))
4	Natasha	[he he he
5	Clara	And then (.) Cambodian and Thai is too <u>slow</u>.
6	Natasha	Mmmm
7	Clara	But (8.0) the slow might now be a good id<u>ea</u> for (.) dinner time.

The first identity category invoked by Clara is "Filipino dancers" (line 1). She characterizes these dancers as "old", "don't have the young generation dancing". Clara then specifically voices complaints from her boss Alf, "there's old people on stage," (lines 1-3). Alf is Filipino, and therefore having older Filipino dancers at an event would be a personal embarrassment to him because these dancers represent his personal ethnic group. Thus, Filipino dancers are not a viable hire for this event because they are old and because Clara's boss, Alf, does not approve of the dancers either. Clara then states other options: Cambodian and Thai (line 5). Clara first evaluates these identities negatively because they are "too slow" (line 5) but then changes her mind and states that "slow" dancers would be good for a dinner event (line 8). Thus, a Cambodian or Thai group is ultimately evaluated positively primarily based on what might make their dances a good fit for a dinner event (e.g., dancers are not "old" and the dance is "slow").

Here, Clara indexes diversity within the "Asian" identity category. Even though she is planning the event for the "Asian" chamber, she is acknowledging national and cultural differences when considering different dance groups. Furthermore, Clara is using her knowledge about how Filipino, Cambodian, and Thai dances are performed *in Big City* when making her decision. Filipino dancing is not evaluated negatively because it is Filipino, but rather because in Big City, only old people do Filipino dances. Clara seems to be aware, however, that both Cambodian and Thai dance groups in Big City might employ younger dancers. Thus, Clara uses knowledge about what types of dances are popularly thought of as "Asian", different nationalities and the dances performed by these nationalities, and who locally performs these dances when

deciding on the best professional hire for her dinner event. Clara handles tensions between diversity and solidarity faced in panethnic organizations by invoking diversity in naming different identity categories and maintaining solidarity by implicitly positioning all of these categories as constituting as "Asian" identity category.

B. Conclusions

This chapter's contribution lies in its focus on everyday communication as one of the contributing factors that negotiates the definition of the Asian American category and its position among racial hierarchies in the United States. Analysis of this data illustrates that "Asian" is not a natural (biological) category that connects members. Instead, an "Asian" identity is strategically and consciously negotiated both among Asian Chamber members and between Asian Chamber members and non-members. Similar to other studies about panethnicity, this study illustrates how Asian panethnicity is the product of structural factors (e.g., Asians formed the organization for purposes of empowerment) and is maintained through creative efforts of members of Asian organizations (Espiritu, 1992).

Unlike previous studies about panethnicity, however, this chapter examines fluidity of panethnic identity through an analysis of everyday communication practices. In focusing on communication, this study foregrounds the importance of everyday lived experiences of people who are caught between multiple expectations for creating a singular Asian identity, for acknowledging cultural diversity, for conducting business within a larger community, and on a personal level, for maintaining some form of authenticity.

Internally, AACC members manage tensions between diversity and solidary through joking about diverse identities. For example, board members joke by code-switching to announce the start of their meeting, and then the board chair, Ghalib, explicitly point out the oddity of speaking one language in a room of people who speak twenty four languages. Clara and Grace joke about the strange behaviors of their "culturally diverse" members. These jokes are a way of forming camaraderie in an organization that is susceptible to division because of differences in

nationality, language, and culture. Furthermore, these jokes are a way that racial and ethnic minority groups maintain pride in their (often negatively evaluated) differences with 'mainstream' American culture. Through explicitly acknowledging diversity internally, chamber members contribute to constructing an interactional norm to acknowledge diversity and difference. Therefore, members, in their interactions with outsiders, participate in 'ethnic switching' among a number of different racial and ethnic identities depending on organizational goals. Thus, chamber members are able to utilize a panethnic Asian identity to maintain solidarity among their group and *also* to meet a variety of organizational goals through acknowledging that diversity is inherent to their organization.

In addition to managing tensions between diversity and solidarity, Asian Chamber members' communication practices also function to empower members of the Asian American community. First, the Asian American Chamber of Commerce, despite the lower population of Asians in Big City, is recognized as one of the three main "ethnic chambers" in the Big City community, alongside the Black Chamber and the Hispanic Chamber. Thus, by maintaining a panethnic organization, Asian Chamber members are able to promote interests of the Asian minority business community with local and state government officials. Second, on a personal level, this acknowledgment of diversity is empowering for these many of these members who might not have the same freedom to discuss ethnic and racial difference in their other jobs (e.g., many work for large, mostly White, corporations). Members of the Asian chamber are expected to speak differently from one another and to invoke different identities based on their different backgrounds. Thus, members of the AACC are able to use a panethnic identity or purposes of political and personal empowerment.

CHAPTER 4

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS ASIAN": ASCRIPTION BY OTHERS AND THE
FORMATION OF ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY

In this chapter, I analyze how non-members of the Asian American Chamber contribute to negotiating an Asian American panethnic identity. While the previous chapter analyzed how AACC members self-ascribed an Asian identity, this chapter analyzes the role that "ascription by others" plays in Asian American identity formation. I analyze how interactions between White and non-White members of the business community construct relationships among racial groups in the Big City business community. I also focus on how these interactions might reflect and reproduce the marginalization of minority groups as the 'other' (Lowe, 2005) in the business community or call attention to and challenge racial hierarchies that exclude minority groups.

A primary way members of this community construct different identities and relationships among identities is through shifting in footing (Goffman, 1981). More specifically, speakers construct differing identities through shifting speaker roles and shifting in the ways that they align themselves towards other groups. For example, members sometimes speak on their own behalf, the behalf of their organization, the behalf of a racial group, construct a particular relationship with their interlocutor, or voice the opinions of another group of which they are not a part. Below I first outline how members of the business community use person referencing practices (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979) and voicing (Bakhtin, 1981) to construct identities and relationships among different identity groups in the business community. I then present several examples that illustrate how an analysis of shifts in footing highlights tensions between empowerment, or AACC members gaining recognition as an organization, and marginalization, or AACC members positioned as an excluded minority group in the Texas business community.

The first example is from an interview with the AACC president and illustrates the role of White Texas Senators and members of the Asian American community in negotiating the relevance and authenticity of "Asian" as an identity category. The next three examples are from

politicians and members of the Texas business community who address chamber members in various ways at the chamber's annual meeting. The first example illustrates how one politician addresses the AACC as members of an Asian business community and also implicitly indexes tensions surrounding racial exclusion in Big City. The second example illustrates differences between a politician's interest in connecting with Asians through using the Chinese zodiac and the AACC members' interest in connecting with politicians through discussion of business related opportunities. The third example illustrates how both AACC members and the local baseball team are able to benefit from a partnership between their organizations by using Asian identity as a connection. The last example illustrates how a White member of the Texas business community characterizes Asians as members of the larger 'minority' business community, thus erasing differences between Asian, Black, and Hispanic identity categories.

A. Footing and Identities in the Texas Business Community

One of the primary ways that members of this business community shift in footing is through the use of person referencing practices (Sacks, 1992; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996). Person referencing practices include the way that members reference themselves, reference their interlocutors, and reference various people who are not in the current interaction. Mainly, members shift among using use first ("I", "we"), second ("you", "you all"), and third ("they") person pronouns to situationally construct identities through their interactions (Silverstein, 1976). These pronouns serve both as referential indexes that reference a particular person or group and as social indexes that point to differing social features (e.g., race) of a particular person or group. For example the use of "you all" by politicians while giving a speech at the AACC annual meeting referentially indexes audience members *and* socially indexes "Asians".

For self-reference, members of this business community shift between using "I" and "we". Since both "I" and "we" and "equally correct forms of reference" (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007, p. 528), using either "I" or "we" and switching between the two can be conceptualized as

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choices members make. When using "I", speak on behalf of themselves as individuals, and when switching to "we" members speak on behalf of a larger group, often the organization and/or racial group of which this member is a part (De Fina, 1995). Members of this community sometimes use a "delimited social we" (Dori-Hacohen, 2014, p. 190) to construct themselves as a member of a group that does not include others in the current interaction (e.g., "we are just as inclusive of you all"). At other times, members use the "open general we" (p. 191) as a reference for all members of the business community (e.g., "we'll roll out the red carpet and let everybody know what a great fabulous city the Big City is").

When referencing others in the interaction, members use the term "you" or "you all". Sometimes the use of "you" functions to select the next speaker in an interaction (Lerner, 2003). For example, a speaker asking, "What have you all done in replace of that?" to a panel of speakers selects that panel ("you all") as next speakers. Other times "you" and "you all" are used during public speeches and function to address audiences without selecting them as next speakers. In this case, the use of "you" referentially indexes audience members, and depending on how it is interactionally invoked, "you" also socially indexes qualities of audience members and relationships between speakers and audience members (similar to Brown & Gilman's (1960) and Morford's (1997) findings about second person pronouns as social indexes). Non-members of the chamber address the chamber as "you" and construct the meaning of "you" in different ways: "you" as a voting demographic, "you" as a business community, "you" as an exotic culture, and "you" as consumers.

In referencing third parties, both members and non-members of the Asian Chamber use the pronoun "they" or name specific identities (e.g., "the politicians", "senators", "the city together form") of various others. In addition, both Alf, the president of the Asian Chamber, and Ed, the president of the Hispanic chamber, voice (Bakhtin, 1981) how third parties address the Asian and Hispanic business communities. For example, Alf voices the politicians as saying, "Hey, what are you doing Asians?" Here, Alf is socially indexing politicians through enacting

politicians' voices and is also naming the racial reference, "Asians" that politicians use. This voicing can be classified as double-voiced discourse (Bakhtin, 1981), because Alf is not only reporting what politicians said but is also using what politicians said to fulfill his own interactional purposes as a speaker (in this case, to explain to me how the Asian chamber was started). Thus, in addition to person referencing practices, members of this community also shift in footing, thereby constructing different identities and relationships among identities, through voicing utterances of various third parties.

In the following analysis, I focus on how members and non-members shift in footing through the use of person-referencing practices, naming identity categories, and voicing particular identities in an effort to unpack the various ways that members situationally construct identities and relationships among different identities in the business community. I focus specifically on how members' communication practices socially index meanings about racial groups in the Big City, Texas business community and whether these utterances reproduce boundaries between marked minority organizations and unmarked White organizations.

1. Forming the Asian Chamber: "Hey what are you doing Asians? ...We need your votes."

In this example, Alf, the president and CEO of the AACC, narrates tensions between the racial label politicians use to categorize Asians and the multiple, nationally tied labels members of the Asian community use to categorize themselves. Throughout the narrative Alf alternates among different speaker roles (Koven, 2002): a narrator role, enacted when Alf tells a story, a character role, enacted when Alf uses reported speech (Tannen, 2007) to voice different personas within the story being told, and an interlocutor role, enacted when Alf stops narration and comments on the story to me, the other interlocutor in the current interaction. When Alf alternates among these differing speaker roles, he constructs his own identity, identities of Asians in the community, and the identities of Texas senators.

The following excerpt is from the preliminary, open-ended interview I conducted with Alf at the beginning of my fieldwork with the AACC. For the most part, Alf spoke freely, while I

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occasionally interjected to ask clarifying questions. This particular segment resembles a narrative

speech event, where Alf is the primary teller of the narrative, rather than an interview speech

event, characterized by a question-and-answer turn taking system. Prior to the following excerpt

of talk, Alf was discussing the multiple Asian organizations started by the chamber. Then, Alf

explains how the AACC was started:

Example 4.1

1	Alf	We started as ah: you know (.) u::m (1.0) Asian Asian American Voters
2		Coalition.
3	Natasha	Oh okay
4	Alf	There was <u>no</u>thing (.) It's chaos (.) on their own (1.0) The politics (.) the
5		politicians challenged us (.) Hey what are you doing Asians? (.) What Asians?
6		There's no such (.) strictly speaking there's no such thing as Asian
7	Natasha	Yeah
8	Alf	There's only Indian, Chinese, Pakistan, Korea (.) But those are different! You
9		cannot!
10	Natasha	(hhh) So
11	Alf	The language eh-
12	Natasha	The politicians were who? The mayor or
13	Alf	Senators
14	Natasha	Senators
15	Alf	Yeah. Hey guys (.) why don't you form themselves-yourselves? We need your
16		votes (hhh)
17	Natasha	Oh okay (.) so these were White senators (.) [and they wanted. Okay.
18	Alf	[Yeah, yeah. Well (.) it-there is
19		somehow (.) a connection because one White-White senator, *(name)*, the w-w-
20		the <u>wife</u> is Asian.
21	Natasha	Oh
22	Alf	It started there
23	Natasha	((laughs))
24	Alf	so it spring to *(names two other senators)* and <u>a:ll</u> the different (.) yeah, so they
25		challenged us. Hey (.) we need your votes. Can you (.) fund my (.) my
26		campaign? (1.0) How do you do that? Well why don't you form yourself
27		among yourselves? <u>That</u> was the beginning and I was the first. I was one of the
28		<u>many</u> who sat down (.) to form the group.

Lines 29-45 were omitted. Alf discusses details of how the Voters Coalition was started and the
purpose of the organization (registering voters). Alf then returns to discussing how the chamber
of commerce was started:

46	Alf	So they were thinking how to get that vote. The Asian vote. So we formed the
47		voters' coalition. It was suc<u>cess</u>ful. So they said, Now it's time. You have the
48		politics. You need business. Why don't you form (.) chamber of commerce?
49		So they formed the chamber of commerce.

Alf takes the narrator and interlocutor speaker roles when he begins his narrative. The

narrator role, characterized by speaking about a past event, is how Alf marks the beginning of the

narrative. Alf briefly enacts the interlocutor role ("you know", line 1) to connect his telling about past events to his current interaction with me. Alf explains how "we", the AACC, started as a Voters Coalition. Alf then reverts to a time previous to the existence of the Asian American Voters Coalition. He states there was "nothing" and "chaos" because Asians were all "on their own" (line 4). Alf's use of the pronoun "they" instead of "we" indicates that while "we" are an organization, before the organization was created "they" were chaotic and unorganized. Alf also uses "we" to position himself as part of the organization and "they" to separate his own identity from the "nothing", "chaos" identities. Then Alf voices another party, the "politicians", as challenging "us" (line 5). Alf is constructing "us" and "politicians" as two separate, non-overlapping identity categories. Furthermore, by using "us", Alf brings himself directly back into the story. Whereas "they" refers to a general unidentified chaotic group of Asians, "us" includes Alf as a member of the group of Asians who was challenged by the politicians.

Alf transitions from a narrator role to a character role and voices the politicians as 1) recognizing the "chaotic" state ("what are you doing") and 2) ascribing the term Asian to the group (line 6). Furthermore, in voicing the politicians as referring to Asians with the pronoun "you", Alf further reifies the distinction between the "politicians" and the "Asians" as two separate identities (previously he created a "politicians" vs "us" dichotomy). Alf voices himself as questioning the label ("what Asians?", line 5) and then enacts an interlocutor role, stepping out of the narrative to explain to me the problem with the Asian identity category. The "Asians" referred to by the politicians are immigrants from multiple different countries in Asia. They therefore often identify according to their country of origin (line 8) and to these immigrants, "there's no such thing as Asian" (line 6). "Asian" is a United States racial category that does not make sense to immigrants from different countries in Asia.

Alf then enacts a character role, voicing the politicians' reaction to Alf's concern about the singular "Asian" category: multiple different, nationally tied identities ("but those are different!") are not possible ("you cannot!", lines 8-9). Alf later, using more reported speech,

makes it clear why according to the politicians, Asians "cannot" identify according to their different nations of origin (lines 15-16). "We" (the politicians) need "your" (Asian) votes. Here, Alf voices the politicians as positioning Asians as constituents, or potential voters, *and* encouraging constituents to adopt a racialized identity category to make it easier for politicians to have one organization (an Asian organization vs. multiple, nationally tied organizations) that they can approach to gather votes. The politician's assignment of Asian as an identity category for this group can be understood as a reflection of hegemonic US racial category classification which constructs 'Asian' as a taken for granted, common sense, racial category. The reason the politicians insist that Asians adopt an Asian category instead of separate national categories ("but those are different! You cannot,") despite objections from members in the Asian American community is to meet professional goals of the politicians – to gather votes.

I then characterize the politicians as "White" (line 17). Until this point, although Alf has created a definite separation between "Asians" and "politicians", he has not explicitly marked the racial identity of the politicians. Alf's talk reflects dominant ideologies that position the "White" racial identity as an unmarked, invisible racial category and minority racial identities as marked and 'other' (Bucholtz, 2011). Alf confirms that the politicians are White ("yeah, yeah", line 18), treating this fact as mundane, not noteworthy. Alf's response suggests that White is the assumed, obvious, racial category for Texas politicians. What Alf does treat as noteworthy, however, is the reason for the "connection" (line 19) between White politicians and Asian constituents. Alf explains that one of the White politicians has an Asian wife (line 20). Alf still separates the White politician identity from the Asian identity, using "*the* wife" instead of *his* wife. Here, Alf is marking interracial relationships as out of the ordinary, both in the professional world and the interpersonal one (e.g., White politicians and Asian constituents, a White politician, the Asian wife).

Alf then outlines interpersonal network ("White Senator", "wife is Asian", "spring to" two other senators and "all the different") that he claims is responsible for the senator's 1)

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recognition of Asians as a community and 2) interest in Asians as a potential constituency. Members of the Asian chamber and the larger business community placed importance on building interpersonal networks as a primary way to build business In fact, the main service provided by most chambers of commerce is face-to-face networking opportunities (in the form of mixers, inviting prestigious speakers, organizing educational panels with successful business people). Therefore, Alf's talks reflects norms in this business community that value interpersonal networks as the root of professional, institutional relationships. Just like businesses that form relationships because of interpersonal networks, Alf attributes the Asian relationship with the politicians to an interpersonal network an Asian wife has built with her White politician husband.

After discussing details about how the Asian American Voters Coalition started (omitted lines), Alf returns to narrating how the chamber started. Alf takes the narrator role and reviews the politicians' reasoning for challenging Asians to form an organization: they wanted "the Asian vote" (line 46). Alf's use of political jargon (The Asian vote) further reifies the positioning of Asians as a single racial constituency, positioning Asians alongside other racial groups (e.g., the Black vote, the Hispanic vote). Alf then takes the character role and voices the politicians, "they", as encouraging Asians to form a chamber of commerce so Asians can participate in a cohesive "business" community because Asians already successfully formed a political one (lines 47-48). The suggestion to form a chamber of commerce stems from the context of the local racialized business community, where two other racialized groups had already formed chambers of commerce: The Black Chamber and The Hispanic Chamber. These chambers of commerce, along with the Asian Chamber, sometimes hold political debates where individual members can choose to contribute to political campaigns (the organizations themselves do not contribute to campaigns). Therefore, politicians are using US systems of racial classification to encourage Asians to form a voting coalition and a chamber of commerce – both of which help politicians meet goals of earning votes and earning money.

Alf voices tensions between the multiple ways people construct the "Asian" identity. Alf voices the "politicians" as 1) seeing "Asian" as a commonsense category and 2) encouraging this identity category despite the objections of "Asians". Members of the Asian group on the other hand, are not aware that the "Asian" identity category exists or what it might mean (e.g., "What Asians?"), and instead still identify according to different national identities (e.g., Indian, Chinese, Pakistan, Korean). Despite objections to the Asian identity, Asian entrepreneurs and community leaders still formed the Asian American Voters Coalition and then eventually the Asian American Chamber of Commerce and use these organizations for purposes of political empowerment (see Chapter 3).

This analysis illustrates the role that politicians played in the formation and maintenance of the Asian identity category. Members of the AACC did not independently choose to form an Asian American organization, but rather were encouraged to do so by White senators who suggested Asians form this chamber. This suggestion from the politicians was driven by the politician's institutional goals. While members of the Asian community initially reject this suggestion, they eventually form a coalition and a chamber of commerce and use this chamber to support to the Asian American business community. Thus, in one sense, politicians are voiced as exerting power over Asians because they encourage Asians to adopt an inauthentic identity category to meet the needs of politicians. Asians are voiced as obeying politicians' request and working within and reproducing the hegemonic systems of US racial classification. In another sense, Asians are voiced as self-empowering by constructing "successful" (line 47) organizations, organizations that gain Asians recognition in the political and business communities.

2. Including the Asians: "You are just as uh we are just as inclusive…"

The following examples present various ways that non-Asian members of the business community address members of the AACC, ultimately illustrating the role that institutional norms play in choices non-members make about how to address this group. These examples are video-recorded excerpts from the AACC's annual meeting, a dinner event held in a ballroom of a fancy

hotel. Throughout the evening the AACC president and the AACC Chairman of the Board highlighted the AACC's accomplishments for the past year (e.g., increase in membership, new corporate partners, revenue gained by the organization, newly acquired board members, etc.) and presented a successful organizational identity for the AACC to all in attendance. Attendees included the AACC members, potential member businesses, Big City corporations, and Big City government officials. Towards the end of the evening, guests were invited to speak to attendees. In the following examples, I analyze the speeches made by a city Councilwoman and city Councilman and by a representative of the city's baseball team. The first example illustrates how a Councilwoman reproduces the Asian identity category by addressing audience members as 'Asians', the second example illustrates how a city Councilman conflates the 'Chinese' identity with the 'Asian' identity, and the third example illustrates how the baseball representative references separate national identities - Korean and Japanese – that the team's baseball players share with members of the AACC.

This first example illustrates how a City Councilwoman constructs relationships between the local City government and the Asian business community and implicitly illustrates racial tensions in the city. The City Councilwoman constructs an identity of inclusion for Big City and then attempts to position Asians as one of the many groups who are included in Big City and with whom the Big City government would like to maintain relationships.

Example 4.2

1	Councilwoman	On behalf of the City we want to not only congratulate you but we
2		extend that hand to let you know that we're here to be able to work
3		with you to succeed in your businesses as well as making sure, and I
4		wanna make sure everybody hears this part. Hello? We wanna make
5		sure that you succeed in your business, but we also wanna make sure
6		that you spend your money in City Texas. Okay?
		Lines 7-23 omitted – Councilwoman introduces City Manager and then reiterates that the city has an open door policy to working with businesses registered with Big City
24		And especially the Asian trade district which I have a lot of respect for
25		and I work very closely with because we wanna make sure that you all
26		know that you are just as uh we are just as inclusive as we are when
27		we are informed and in communicating and inviting to all of you.
28		Thank you, so very much, appreciate it.

The Councilwoman begins her speech by congratulating the AACC on its accomplishments and then starts to construct an inclusive identity for the Big City local government: "we're here to be able to work with you to succeed in your businesses" (lines 2-3). Here, the Councilwoman outlines how "we", the Big City local government, provides helpful services[6] to "you", her audience members. She addresses her audience members as business owners ("your businesses") with no explicit mention of racial identity. The Councilwoman then marks what she sees as the more important part of the Big City-business owner relationship (lines 3-4): reciprocation. Big City business owners, in return for getting help with their business success, should reciprocate by spending the money they earn within Big City. Although not explicitly mentioning race here, the Councilwoman might be especially emphasizing this particular point ("I wanna make sure everybody hears this part, hello?", lines 3-4) because she is aware that many of her Asian audience members are immigrants and might spend their money in their countries of origin instead of in Big City. The Councilwoman continues by introducing the new City Manager and reiterates the openness of the city to working with all local businesses (omitted lines).

Towards the end of her speech, the Councilwoman explicitly mentions the Asian identity for the first time, tying it to a business community located within her district (the particular area of Big City she serves): The Asian Trade District (line 24). The "Asian trade district" is a local community of mostly Korean-owned businesses. Despite its mostly Korean affiliation, this business community was designated as the *Asian* Trade District by Big City in 1999. This is the first time that the Councilwoman is explicitly constructing the Big City relationship with *Asian* businesses. The Councilwoman constructs her relationship with the Asian Trade District as one of "respect" (line 25) and intimacy/familiarity ("I work very closely with", line 25). The

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[6] Businesses operating within Big City (or any city) need to work with the city for purposes of zoning, taxation, city safety codes, obtaining various permits, etc. Therefore, having a good relationship with city officials is pertinent to the success of a business.

Councilwoman then continues conveying the openness of Big City officials to work closely with Asian businesses, using the pronoun "we" (line 25) to reference the Big City officials and "you" or "you all" (lines 25-26) to reference the Asian business community.

Then the Councilwoman self-repairs (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) of "you are just as" to "we are just as" (line 26). Here, the trouble source, or that which was considered repairable by the Councilwoman, was the pronoun (you vs we), the social group these pronouns reference (Asian business community vs. Big City government officials), and determining which of these groups should be burdened with the responsibility for inclusion (e.g., "you are just as included" vs. "we are just as inclusive") (line 26). Using the pronoun "you" puts the burden on the Asian business community to reach out to Big City officials, and by repairing the "you are just as" to "we are just as" the Councilwoman shifts the responsibility for inclusion onto the Big City government. Furthermore, the Councilwoman's use of "just as" indicates that the status quo is that Asians might not be generally treated "just as" included in the Big City business community, and that "we" (the government) might not be perceived as being "just as inclusive" toward Asians as "we" are to others. The Councilwoman expands on the particular ways that Big City is inclusive by stating that Big City is "informed", "communicating" and "inviting to all of you" (line 27).

This repair along with the Councilwoman's repeated insistence that Asians are "just as" included can be explained as a product of local positioning of Asians and of historical relations between racial groups in Big City. First, staff members of the AACC conveyed on several occasions that Asians are hesitant to work with government officials because they distrust the governments in their countries of origin and therefore do not see the benefits of working with US government officials. Thus, the Councilwoman's speech might be a response to the perception (or reality) that many Asians do not reach out to local government and is attempting to change this relationship by emphasizing the openness of the Big City government to working with and supporting local Asian-owned businesses.

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Second, the Councilwoman's communication practices also speak to racial tensions in Big City. Texas (and the United States in general) has a history of racial segregation and discrimination which has resulted in economic disempowerment of racial minorities. Thus, there are policies that allow businesses to officially register as "minority-and-women-owned" businesses and provide incentives for corporations and governments to work with certified minority businesses. The AACC and its Asian-owned member businesses fall under this category, and the Councilwoman is speaking at an AACC event. Thus, racial inequality, while not explicitly addressed, seems to underlie the Councilwoman's insistence on inclusion and explain her repair.

In fact, her insistence on inclusion and her repair highlight that the status quo in the Texas community might be one of non-inclusiveness, and this is something that she and local city officials are trying to change. If inclusion was the status quo, the Councilwoman would not need to emphasize it as part of her speech. As a point of comparison, government officials working with the North City Chamber, a chamber with mostly White men and women, did not emphasize inclusion when they addressed chamber members. Thus, the Councilwoman is being sensitive to racial tensions that may make Asians feel excluded and therefore emphasizes the "we" (Big City officials) are taking it upon ourselves to attend "your" event, speak directly to "you", and emphasize our willingness to work with "you". Thus, both local positioning of Asians as hesitant to work with the government and macro-level histories of racial inequality play a role in how the Councilwoman communicatively constructs Asian identity and the relationship between local government and the Asian business community. The Councilwoman's talk, even as she claims inclusiveness, does function to reflect and reproduce the distinction between included (White) businesses and non-included (Asian/minority) businesses in the Texan business community.

3. Asian Texans: "It's the year of the dragon[7]…"

This excerpt illustrates how tensions between an Asian-associated cultural identity and non-raced professional identities become articulated and negotiated through an interaction between a local politician and Ghalib, the chair of the board of the Asian chamber. In this excerpt from the AACC annual meeting, a Big City Councilman uses a dragon as a symbol connecting Asian and Big City cultures and does not address his audience's professional identities. After the Councilman finishes his speech, the AACC Chairman of the Board asks the Councilman to return to the stage to announce an upcoming conference that would be of general interest to Big City business people. Below is the Councilman's speech as well as the addendum made at the request of the AACC Chairman of the Board:

Example 4.3

1	Councilman	Happy New Year Happy Chinese New Year (.) Uh I think it's what forty
2		two hundred and something ((inaudible)) and it's the year of the dragon
3		don't forget that. Uh that's the dragon is a big deal in Big City because
4		we're (.) <u>dragons</u> round here. And also if you notice the <u>bi:g</u> <u>dra:g</u>on, you
5		know the bi:g re:d flying dragon that's big here in Big C because it's the
6		year of the dragon. So (.) you guys have a great time. Thank you very
7		much for inviting me. I'm *name* district 5, and its east to southeast City is
8		my district. Happy New Year, I look forward to working with you.

| 9 | Alf | *starts introducing the Baseball Speaker interrupted by Councilman* |

10	Councilman	Ghalib wanted me to let everybody know that we're gonna have the uh
11		national (.) conference on mayors it's gonna be here in June. Gonna be an
12		opportunity to have three hundred and <u>fifty</u> of our (.) mayors across the
13		United States (.) come to Big City so (.) I hope we'll roll out the red
14		carpet and let everybody know what a great (.) fabulous city the Big City
15		is so this is a <u>great</u> chance to (.) have our moment in the sun. Thanks.
16		

The Councilman, like many of the other Asian and non-Asian speakers at the Annual Meeting, acknowledges that it is the (American) "New Year" and the "Chinese New Year" (line 1). The Councilman's opening fits the occasion because the AACC annual meeting is being held in January and also, coincidentally, on the eve of Chinese New Year's. Therefore, AACC staff

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[7] The councilman names a different animal and draws connections between the Chinese Zodiac and Big City identity. I changed the name of the animal to "dragon" for purposes of confidentiality.

and board members along with many of the invited speakers (Chinese and non-Chinese) start their speeches with "Happy New Year" or "Happy Chinese New Year". Although not everyone is Chinese, the acknowledgment of the holiday illustrates how the AACC attempts to be inclusive of all different Asian ethnicities as part of their organizational identity, thus contributing to re-contextualizing a Chinese holiday as being encompassed under a Asian identity.

The Councilman then references the Chinese zodiac, claiming that it is the year of the dragon (lines 2-3). The Councilman uses the dragon as a marker of Chinese identity and positions Chinese identity as relevant to all members of his audience (though only 10-15% of the audience is Chinese). The Councilman's application of Chinese custom to an Asian audience could be explained in terms of individual ignorance but in this case can also be explained by examining the Councilman's communication practices within the context of the AACC construction of the Asian identity. Throughout the evening, members of the AACC staff and board have repeatedly acknowledged that it is Chinese New Year. Furthermore, party favors provided at the meeting included "gold" coins given out as symbols of good luck, another Chinese New Year practice. While the AACC acknowledges Chinese New Year to be inclusive of their many Chinese and Taiwanese members, the Councilman's use of the Chinese zodiac to connect with all members could be interpreted as equating a Chinese custom with an Asian identity.

The Councilman then uses the dragon as a symbol to draw connections between Asians and Big City. The dragon is important to Asians because it is the year of the dragon in the Chinese calendar (lines 1-3). The dragon is important to Big City because "we're dragons here" (line 4). "Dragons" is the name of the Big City football team and therefore is symbolic of the specific Big City identity. Furthermore, the Councilman uses the pronoun "we" to position himself as a "dragon" and subsequently as part of the Big City identity. It is unclear whether the Councilman's use of "we" also includes his Asian audience. One interpretation is that the Councilman uses "we" to position Asians as included in the "dragon" category because to be a "dragon" you have to be "here" and Asians are "here". However, this could also be read as the

Councilman explaining to his Asian audience, who are not from Big City and use a different calendar, why the "dragon" might be important to 'real' natives of Big City.

The councilman then mentions a second reason that the dragon is important in Big City: the famous big Dragon (line 4). The Dragon is structure of a red flying dragon that has been displayed on the roof of the City's first skyscraper and therefore is also closely tied to Big City identity. Here, the Councilman implicitly marks his audience as separate from the Big City identity when he starts with the premise that his audience might not have seen the Dragon ("if you notice", line 4) and also might not be know what the Dragon looks like ("you know the bi:g re:d flying dragon", lines 4-5). The positioning of the Asian audience as unaware of a marker of Big City identity positions the audience as excluded from Big City identity. The explanation of the Dragon also seems to indicate that the use of "we" earlier might be exclusive of his Asian audience. According to the Councilman, the Asian audience connects to the dragon for "Asian" reasons and the Councilman connects to the dragon for "Big City" identity reasons. Unlike the Councilwoman who treats Asians as a local business community, the Councilman's utterances position Asians as 'forever foreigners' (Lo & Reyes, 2009) who despite living and conducting business in Big City are not 'real natives' of the city.

The Councilman, aside from closing his speech with "I look forward to working with you" (line 8), does not address Asians as a business community. Seconds after the Councilman finishes his speech, he returns to the stage at the request of AACC Chairman of the Board, Ghalib, to make a second announcement about a conference on mayors. While not explicitly stated by the Councilman, the reason that announcing the conference to this group is important is because it is a networking opportunity for AACC member businesses. The Chairman of the Board is an extremely wealthy businessman and is well-connected to Texas government officials. He mentioned, for example, that he is friends with long time Texas governor Rick Perry. Therefore, a conference which includes mayors from across the nation could be a useful source of connections for AACC members who want to form positive relationships with city officials so they can

expand their businesses. Thus, Ghalib may have wanted the Councilman to make an announcement about an event which appeals to the *professional* identities of AACC members.

The Councilman now addresses his audience as residents of Big City and as sharing his excitement about the "opportunity" (line 11) to "let everybody know what a great (.) fabulous city the Big City" (line 13). The use of the pronoun "our" (line 14) at the end of his speech constructs all those present as fellow Big City residents. Thus the Councilman, at the request of the AACC Chairman of the Board, shifts from constructing two different cultures (Asian vs Big City) to addressing all of his audience as Big City residents. Furthermore, also at Ghalib's request, the Councilman shifts from addressing "Asians" as a culture to addressing his audience as members of the business community who would be interesting in attending a conference.

4. Asian nationalities and professional goals: "Our new addition"

The following excerpt illustrates how AACC members and the local baseball team are able to use ethnic identities to form and maintain a mutually beneficial partnership[8]. The baseball team already has a Japanese player and has recently acquired a Korean player and therefore wants to reach out to potential Korean consumers. Alf proudly introduces the new partnership between the Asian chamber and the baseball team. He then adds, "We have two Asians there". Alf is positioning the Japanese and Korean players as "Asian", thus reproducing common-sense knowledge about countries that constitute an Asian identity. Similar to his previous explanation about the White politician and the Asian wife, Alf is again pointing out how interpersonal connections (two Asians on a baseball team) translate into a business partnership between the AACC and the baseball team organization. Alf invites the Baseball Representative to speak and an excerpt of her speech is below:

Example 4.4
| 1 | Baseball | I'm very excited about our new (.) addition to our team (.) and look forward |
| 2 | Rep | to seeing all of you at the ball park. Um (.) pay attention we'll be they'll be a |

---

[8] Partners sign a contract to provide a set amount of money over the course of a year to sponsor a variety of chamber events. Corporations must pay at least $10,000 to become a partner. All partners, by default, become members of the chamber.

3	lot of press in the Korean newspapers (.) about special discounts and Korean
4	heritage night along with our (.) continued Japan-America friendship day.

The "new addition" (line 1) referenced by the Baseball Representative is a baseball player from South Korea who has been playing on American baseball teams since 2005. The Korean player was officially added to the baseball team about a month prior to this event, making him the second Asian on the team, in addition to a Japanese player who joined the team two years prior. The Representative then uses the conjunction "and" (line 1) to position this new addition as an indication that the Asian audience members, "all of you" (line 2) will now attend baseball games because the new addition is Asian. "Look forward to seeing all of you at the ball park" also functions as an invitation to all audience members. Similar to Alf, the Representative draws a connection between the baseball team and her audience by using the Asian identity of the new player. The Representative positions "all of you" as a market of consumers who are potential buyers of tickets for baseball games, and treats them as consumers by informing them about "special discounts" (line 3).

The Representative then indexes Koreans in particular as being one identity in her audience by directly addresses her audience ("pay attention", line 3) and then informs her audience that there will be "press in the Korean newspapers" and a "Korean Heritage night". The representative adds that in addition to the "Korean Heritage Night", which she positions as new to celebrate the new Korean player, there will be a "continued Japan American friendship day" (lines 3-4). Therefore, in addition to gaining consumers through providing discounts, the baseball Representative is also marketing to Korean and Japanese consumers, and Asians in general, through advertising 'cultural' events that might interest Korean and Japanese families. The Representative mentions specific nationalities rather than using the term 'Asian' because the goal of the baseball organization is not to create solidarity among all Asians but rather to celebrate their specific players and to use their players to reach out to particular Asian communities who might feel connected to those players. Therefore, since there is one Korean player, the team is

advertising in Korean newspapers and holding a Korean heritage night, and since there is one

Japanese player, the team is holding a Japan America Friendship event.

5. Combatting racialization: "We have to fight perception"

While the previous examples illustrate how outsiders address chamber members as

belonging to various "Asian" ethnic groups, the following example illustrates how some

communication practices position Asian Americans, along with other racial minority groups, as a

general homogenous racialized "other". The following example is taken from a Diversity panel

held by one of Big City's universities. The panel speakers include the CEO's of the Asian,

Hispanic, and Black chambers of commerce. The panel's moderator, an African-American

woman, asked questions about what contributions the "diverse chambers" make to the community

and what challenges the "diverse chambers" face. In addition, audience members (who included

people of all races and ethnicities, including White) asked questions throughout the panel

discussion. Below is a question asked by a White female audience member, whom I call Pam, to

the panelists. Pam starts by discussing the "City together" forum, an organization focused on the

economic empowerment of ethnic minorities. Pam describes how the company she worked for

would "endorse" (give money to) the City Together Forum as a way of fulfilling its commitment

to issues of diversity. Due to changes in leadership and economic downturn the forum had been

dissolved, and now there are three separate chambers of commerce along with multiple minority

owned businesses, which makes it difficult for corporations to easily "commit" to (monetarily

support) diversity.

Before Ed, the head of the Hispanic chamber, answers her questions, both Alf and the

head of the Black chamber, Ronald, answer by describing all the ways the three ethnic chambers

are trying to work together. Ed, on the other hand emphasizes how despite the "perception" that

all the minority chambers are the same, they actually fulfill different business needs and need to

be examined as unique individual organizations rather than as all similar businesses which fulfill

a 'minority' requirement. Pam's question and an excerpt of Ed's answer are shown below.

Example 4.5

1	Pam	I just wanna circle back with, I remember the City Together Forum. And I remember
2		the City Together Forum when I worked for EDS which doesn't exist anymore. Um,
3		and we, as a company, you know the CEO would endorse you know the commitment
4		to the City Together Forum which would endorse, you know, economic development
5		for the community. Why did that get dissolved and what have you done in replace of
6		that? Because we would actually fill out a survey and metrics and say here's what
7		we're doing around supplier diversity, here's what we're doing around you know
8		women and minority owned spending, here's our diversity programs. You all would
9		collect that information to show yes we are making a commitment and we were, you
10		know the word accountable comes up to mind again. We were held accountable for
11		increasing that commitment year over year as a corporation, and in conjunction with
12		the chambers of commerce, the minority and women owned businesses um and you
13		know ((inaudible)). So so why did that get dissolved and what's been put in place
14		and how do you bring all that together again because um, economic empowerment
15		involves you know commitment on everyone's part so.

Omitted – Ronald describes ways chambers have worked together in the absence of the City Together forum; Alf claims that the City Together forum got dissolved during the economic downturn in 2008, and corporations need to help start a new City Together forum since corporations started the first one

16	Ed	A <u>lot</u> of it also has to do (.) um (.) going back to questions about what sets what <u>why</u>
17		is it uh in (.) in a company's uh you know <u>why</u> is it a good thing or a smart decision
18		to in<u>vest</u> in the chamber or be <u>part</u>ners with a with >one of the< uh the minority and
19		ethnic chambers and that's um. We have to fight (.) perception like li-what probably
20		has been (.) discussed here at some point today. And the perception is that (.) you are
21		who you are. You're-you're a minority chamber. They (.) sort of (.) really tune us
22		out. And that's just the reality when we sit down. I mean we've got uh I can tell you
23		that we've had great discussions and then all of a sudden (.) bo-day later week later,
24		it's kinda like "did you really hear what I said? Because it sounds like" You know.
25		And so it's breaking down some of those walls that have been around for a long time,
26		and you know I think uh you know ma-we made some progress, and then all of a
27		sudden we got to a point where (.) people sort of accepted that we were around (.)
28		and uh but didn't really (.) look to see <u>what</u> was, you know <u>what</u>'s the <u>sub</u>stance.
29		<u>What</u>'s the what's the <u>val</u>ue (.) and uh and so they sorta just kinda just see us as this,
30		well yes we are (.) one of three (.) but uh I think if you really (.) take a look (.) inside
31		at what each of us brings, I think you'll be pretty surprised. Um, and I think it's it's
32		really something that-It's why I took the job. I was on the board I-I mean, I wouldn't
33		be here today if I didn't (.) really truly believe in what we're doing and-and-and the
34		opportunities that could come for not just for the <u>cham</u>ber but for (.) the com<u>mun</u>ity
35		uh for the <u>bus</u>iness community.

Pam starts by stating how she personally ("I") remembers the City Together Forum and

then positions herself as an employee of an organization, EDS (line 2). Pam then uses the identity

category "we", clarifies that "we" means the "company", and then labels the "CEO" as the main

representative of her company who "endorsed the commitment" to the City Together Forum

(lines 3-4). A commitment, in the business community, is another word for supporting an

organization by giving them money. By giving money to the City Together Forum, the company Pam worked for was able to show that they "endorsed" the goals of the Forum, which included "economic development for the community" (lines 4-5). Pam then asks about why "that" got dissolved and what "you" have done to replace it (line 5). Here, Pam's use of the pronoun "you" positions all the current panelists as part of one group, a group who is responsible for not only the dissolving of the Forum but also for setting up a new similar program.

Pam's question functions as an accusation, and the prior talk (the history of her company as supporting diversity using the City Together forum) achieves grounds for this accusation (Drew, 1978). Pam continues by providing more details to support her accusation. She shifts back to discussing her company's actions, using "we", and states that her company "would fill out a survey and metrics" and be able to make specific claims about their actions regarding "supplier diversity", "minority owned spending", and "diversity programs" (lines 6-8). Pam then outlines the role of "you all" (lines 8-9), again positioning the City Together Forum and these three different chambers of commerce as one group, in the process: to "collect that information" for Pam's company so Pam's company could "show yes we are making a commitment" (lines 8-9). Pam describes working with the City Together Forum as a way that her company could easily be held "accountable" (line 10) for their commitment to the ethnic minority community and in addition, could easily increase their commitment over time.

Being "held accountable" is another phrase that the panelists and audience members often use. Being "held accountable" means that if businesses are supposed to do something (e.g., spend a certain amount of money to support the ethnic minority business community), then there needs to be specific measures (e.g., tracking how much money is spent and measuring the impact on the growth of ethnic minority businesses) that illustrate that businesses have in fact done what they were supposed to do. Pam states that after the City Together Forum was dissolved, there was 1) no single place to make a "commitment" to minorities and 2) the new available options do not provide "metrics" so companies can be held "accountable" for their "commitments". Pam then

continues by saying that being "held accountable" is a joint effort on the part of her company, the chambers of commerce, and the minority and women owned businesses. She then repeats her question and ends by saying that "economic empowerment involves commitment on everyone's part" (lines 14-15).

Overall, Pam constructs two sets of identities, "we", her company and other non-minority companies, and "you all", the heads of the "diverse" chambers, the people who work for City Together, and members of the ethnic minority business community more generally. "We" are responsible for "making a commitment" to ethnic minority programs such as the City Together Forum. "You all" are responsible for forming a single company that provides specific "metrics" (measurements) of this "commitment" to make it easy for corporations to "be held accountable". The three separate chambers, therefore, should work together as one "minority" organization to make it easier for corporations to support "minority" groups *and* should develop a system to collect information to hold the "committed" corporations "accountable".

In lines omitted from the transcript, Ronald replies first to Pam's accusation, stating that was not working for the Chambers during that time and is not aware of why the forum got resolved. He does mention that the presidents of the three minority chambers meet and find ways to work together. Alf mentions that corporations were the ones who actually started the City Together, but after the economic crisis in 2008 the organization dissolved and none of the attempts to re-start it have worked. Alf asks for "passionate advocates from the corporations" to help start another City Together forum. Ed briefly mentions that the City Together Forum dissolved because of the economic downturn and then moves on to discuss what he finds problematic with the City Together forum.

Ed emphasizes that the chambers are individual businesses and should not be thought of as a singular set of "minority chambers". Pam's question takes for granted that supporting minority economic development is something that companies should do because it is required by policies and helps develop the local economy. Ed, however, points out that what people should be

thinking about is why it might be beneficial to "invest in the chamber" or be "partners with one of the minority and ethnic chambers" (lines 17-18). Ed, therefore, is not constructing a relationship of charity, where corporations give money to support underprivileged minorities, but a relationship of equality, where two companies "partner" with one another. For example, in an earlier excerpt, Alf states that the Baseball team is a new partner, which means that the Baseball team has given the Asian Chamber a substantial amount of money. However, in return, the Baseball team can make connections with the Asian community to sell more tickets to their baseball games.

Ed then states that "we" (the minority chambers) have to "fight perception" (line 20). This perception is that others view the chamber as a "minority chamber" and because of this "they…tune us out" (lines 22-23). In other words, non-minority businesses who partner with chambers are not interested in each chambers' business practices but rather support the chamber because they are required to support the minority community, and it is a positive organizational identity to "support" diversity. Ed supports this claim by telling a short narrative, claiming that he will "sit down" and have "great discussions" and then voices his reaction to conversations he has with corporations after these discussions (e.g., "did you really hear what I said?", line 25). Ed frames this situation, where minority businesses are not listened to by non-minority businesses, as a challenge that has faced minority businesses for quite some time. Minority businesses need to "break down walls that have been around for a long time" and have made "progress" (lines 26-27). However, the progress has only gotten minority businesses to a point where they are recognized as "minorities" and companies support these businesses as a part of their "diversity" efforts. However, Ed points out, even though "minority" businesses are "accepted", none of the non-minority companies focus on the "substance" or "value" of minority businesses.

Ed then voices tensions among the minority business community. He first rejects the "minority" business identity by stating that it is detrimental because "they sorta just kinda see us as this" general "minority" business. He then embraces the "minority" business identity by stating

that "well yes we are one of three" and then again pulls away from a minority identity by stating that "if you really take a look inside at what each one of us brings, I think you'll be pretty surprised" (lines 31-32). Here Ed is struggling with the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a minority identity for his organization. The three ethnic chambers do work together because they recognize that others see them as one large "minority" group and therefore working together can be beneficial to cater to outsiders' perceptions *and* for these chambers to seem like a larger, and therefore more important and influential group. However, by adopting this "minority" identity category, each chamber sacrifices its own individual identity as an organization that serves specific needs. Throughout this panel discussion, each chamber CEO outlines what makes his chamber different from the other three chambers and why working with his particular chamber is beneficial for non-minority companies.

Ronald, the president of the Black Chamber, for example, discusses how his chamber is unique because "we're real big in our events and member education. I would say we tap into that part of the corporation that would could do those things with they see value in those things we're doing." Ronald continues by stating that the Black chamber convinces corporations that they can meet their "bottom line" for diversity while also supporting events and programs unique to the Black Chamber in which the corporations see value. Ed, the head of the Hispanic chamber, markets his chamber as unique to corporations by emphasizing that working with the Hispanic chamber gives corporations "access to a market" and allows corporations to "do business with a growing market". Here, Ed characterizes Hispanics as a market, and since Hispanics are close to 50% of the City population, it would be a good investment for businesses to partner with a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Alf discusses refugees from Nepal and Bhutan that the chamber supports through ESL programs and computer programs and how many corporations interested in helping refugees can invest in the Asian Chamber while also fulfilling diversity requirements. Thus the AACC also uses its uniqueness as an avenue to persuade corporations and government to invest in partnerships.

This uniqueness, however, is often overlooked by corporations who see all the chambers as 'minority' organizations. In the above excerpt, Ed emphasizes that the reason he took the position as the head of the Hispanic chamber is because he "really truly believes in what we're doing" and the "opportunities" not just for the "chamber" but for the "business community" (lines 33-35). Thus, Ed's focus is not on acting as a "minority" organization, but as an organization that provides opportunities for the "business community". This interaction between Pam and the heads of the minority chambers, however, reflects and reproduces divisions between minority and non-minority businesses in the Texas business community, where minority businesses are often excluded because of their marked minority status.

B. Conclusions

While the previous chapter illustrated various ways that Asian Americans creatively invoke racial and ethnic identities to meet organizational goals, this chapter illustrates how invoking Asian American identities can contribute to the marginalization of Asian Americans, and minorities more generally, in the business community. First, members' use of person references tends to mark AACC members as 'others' in this community. Alf voices the politicians, for example, as treating Asians ("you") as a racialized group, one that is separate from the rest of the business community. The Councilwoman, in reaching out to the Asian community ("you all"), is also implicitly pointing to status quo relationships among businesses in the community that may not be inclusive of Asian American groups. The Councilman positions Asians ("you") as foreigners, othering Asians by not positioning Asians as members of Big City *nor* as businesses who operate in Big City. Pam's utterances reproduce divisions between (White) corporations and minority owned businesses when she constructs a relationship of charity between the two groups ("we" and "you all") and accuses minority groups of not doing enough to help themselves.

The Baseball representative differs from other non-members in addressing the AACC. Unlike other non-members, the Baseball representative acknowledges different national identities

that constitute and Asian identity, advertises in Korean newspapers that reach out to Korean audiences who might come watch a Korean baseball player, treats Asians as normal consumers by offering discounts, and participates in a partnership with the Asian American Chamber, thus creating a relationship of equality rather than one of charity. I argue that the reason for this exception is because doing all of these things is beneficial to the Baseball team as an organization. The Baseball team has two respected members of their organization from different Asian countries and has goals to celebrate those specific players. Thus, it is in their best interest to learn about and care about differences among members of the Asian community. Furthermore, the Baseball team wants to sell tickets and therefore would be more interested in which identity categories appeal to their consumers (e.g. Korean) and which identity categories do not (e.g., Asian).

Politicians, on the other hand, reference Asians as a single minority group for purposes of meeting their goals to gather votes or to reach out to a single business community to remind them to keep money within the city. Some politicians (e.g., the Councilman) make mistakes about Asian American identity or do not understand that AACC members want to be treated as *businesses* because it is not in their interest to do so. The Asian vote (only 3% of the Big City population) does not greatly affect a politician's careers, especially since most Texans are Republicans and most local politicians hold seats for multiple terms. Reaching out to the Asian community is done for the same reasons that corporations give money to minority organizations – to 'support diversity' and to be 'inclusive'. These values are generally accepted in the Big City community, but they do contribute to relationships between those who give (politicians reaching out, corporations making "commitments to diversity") and those who receive (minority organizations).

Overall, then, Asian Americans negotiate identity for purposes of meeting Asian organizational goals, and non-Asians negotiate identity for purposes of meeting their various organizational goals. When non-Asian goals match AACC goals (e.g. the Baseball partnership),

Asian Americans are successful in using their racial and ethnic identities for purposes of empowerment. However, adopting this identity category also has the potential to 'other' Asians as marked minorities, as foreigners, and as charity cases who are not legitimate organizations.

CHAPTER 5

"WHO'S THE FACE?": WHITENESS AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN THE

NORTH CITY CHAMBER

This chapter addresses the question, "How is White identity interactionally accomplished by White people?" This question is difficult to answer, in part, because unlike members of minority groups who often explicitly claim their minority identities, members of the White racial group engage in colorblind discourses (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Bucholtz, 2011; Gallagher, 2003; Lewis, 2004; Whitehead & Lerner, 2009) where they do not explicitly address their own racial identity or others' racial identities. Furthermore, White identity is hegemonic (Gramsci, 1972), and therefore White ways of speaking and behaving are treated as the taken for granted, common sense, normal, "unremarkable – even unnoticeable" (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 15). Minority groups, on the other hand, are often documented as making their ethnic identity relevant through ways of speaking that deviate from normative, invisible 'White' ways of speaking (e.g., African Americans speak AAVE, Latino Americans and other immigrant groups code-switch between different languages or speak accented English) (Fought, 2006; Lippi-Green, 1997).

Scholars of organizational communication have repeatedly noted that due to the difficulty of spotting the enactment of Whiteness in communication, many scholars have studied the communication practices of White, male management as normative and implicitly positioned the experiences of women and racial minorities as outside of mainstream organizational communication research (Allen, 1995; Ashcraft, 2011; Ashcraft & Allen, 2003; Bates, 2001; Grimes, 2002; Mease & Terry, 2012; Mumby, 2011; Nkomo, 1992; Orbe, 1998; Parker, 2001). One way to problematize this approach to studying organizations is by interrogating whiteness (Grimes, 2002), or focusing on how seemingly normative, neutral, non-racial organizational communication practices index a White identity and implicitly maintain racial hierarchies that value Whiteness as the dominant, unmarked professional identity.

In this chapter, I illustrate how communication practices of the members of the all-White North City Chamber implicitly construct and maintain Whiteness as a hegemonic professional identity for the organization. NCC chamber members construct and maintain Whiteness as an identity central to their organization through engaging in colorblind discourses (Bucholtz, 2011) and through foregrounding a Texan identity throughout their interactions, an identity ideologically associated with Whiteness (Fought, 2006).

Colorblind discourse can be defined as "a displayed lack of orientation to or awareness of race" by White Americans (Bucholtz, 2011, p. 168). Common discursive strategies include both erasing race, or "using nonracial terms to talk about racial categories", and delaying the mention of racial categories through the use of "pauses, self-interruptions and other strategies" (p. 169). NCC members engage in erasing race when they use terms like "an interesting fabric of folks" to characterize racial and ethnic diversity in the Big City area, thus avoiding mention of specific ethnic or racial identities. When members do not "erase" race, they illustrate adherence to norms for colorblindness by delaying the mention of racial categories by using disclaimers (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975), pausing, and hedging. For example, when discussing the reputation of the North City chamber in the business community, George, a White male NCC staff member starts with a disclaimer (""I'll be real honest because I'm in that category) and hedges with laughter and pauses before finally stating that "white men" are perceived as "running" the chamber of commerce. These precursors to the mention of a racial category act as face-saving (Goffman, 1955) communicative actions and also mark the upcoming utterance not usually discussed by members of the North City Chamber.

Members of this chamber of commerce might avoid discussions of race in an effort to be politically correct, to not accidentally offend a member of the minority group, and also because by not mentioning racial categories members of this chamber feel as if they are being open to members of all racial groups. However, although colorblind discourses are generally thought of as "attempts to 'move beyond race', such positions begin from a predominantly white experience

of the world, where race is perceived as unimportant, thereby negating the life world of people of color, whose experiences are still very much shaped by race" (Whitehead & Lerner, 2009, p. 617). Colorblind ways of speaking, therefore, index a White racial identity because they more so reflect the experiences of White people.

This claim – that colorblind discourses are an index of Whiteness – is directly relevant to my experiences working with the North City Chamber and the Asian American Chamber. The North City Chamber never discussed resources for minority and women owned businesses during their events. The Asian American chamber, in contrast, emphasized that these resources are the main way that members of their chamber could break in to the business community. Members of the Asian American Chamber, along with the Black Chamber and Hispanic Chamber, stated that federal policies requiring public and private organizations to work with minority owned businesses was the only incentive that larger corporations had to break away from their "old boy networks". Affirmative action policies require corporate and government agencies to give contracts to minority-owned businesses that were previously excluded from the business community because of Texas's history of explicit segregation and discrimination. Therefore, when White members of the NCC engage in colorblind discourses, they illustrate their (White people's) privileged position in US racial hierarchies (Frankenberg, 2001) and in the Texas business community more particularly.

In addition to practicing colorblind discourses, North City members also implicitly constructed Whiteness through foregrounding a Texan, at times masculine, identity as central to their professional identities. For example, members compared Texas with "the deep south", compared "Massachusetts" to "Texas" and displayed knowledge about Texas sports teams and about barbecuing. Many members and guest speakers of this chamber tended to be White *men*, and therefore, often implicitly constructed masculinity as part and parcel of their Texan professional identity. Masculinity can be defined as multiple different enactments of identity, "which have in common a claim to authority that puts a person at the top of some hierarchy"

(Kiesling, 2001, p. 252). NCC members positioned themselves as authorities by displaying knowledge about masculine activities like barbecuing (e.g., a "nice cooker", a "weber", "how much meat I have to cook") and by positioning one's own masculine identities as constitutive of normative professional identities (e.g., invoking fatherhood and sports team affiliation as constituting a normative professional identity). Most members orient to southern, masculine identities as normative professional identities, thereby reproducing southern masculinity as the taken for granted, hegemonic professional identity category for their organization.

Fought (2006) argues that these regional varieties of communication (e.g., southern accent, identities, vocabulary) are an index of Whiteness, whereas minority communication practices are thought to be affiliated with race but not to vary regionally. This argument can be explained by comparing the White, NCC member practices with practices of members of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce. The Asian American Chamber explicitly mentioned racial and ethnic categories on a daily basis. Upon immigrating to the United States, members of the Asian American chamber were positioned belonging to a non-White, "Asian" identity category. AACC members try to utilize this identity for purposes of economic empowerment. They do so through acknowledging their organizational members' ethnic diversity (e.g., "Filipino", "Korean", "Cambodian", "Indian") and strategically referencing different ethnic identities to meet organizational goals. Furthermore, members of the Asian chamber apply for federal and corporate grants targeted toward ethnic minorities and therefore often used racial categories when discussing their own identity ("Asian") and identities of other minority groups ("Black", "Hispanic"). This practical, matter-of-fact way that chamber members use racial categories to meet organizational goals is the product of their racialized position in US racial hierarchies.

Unlike the North City Chamber, the Asian Chamber, along with the other racially based chambers (the Black chamber and the Hispanic chamber) cannot afford to *not* talk about race. While Texans of all races barbecue and watch sports, these identities are not foregrounded by

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members of the minority chambers. Being able to foreground these identities is a privilege that these chamber members do not have because their lives in the business community and otherwise are largely shaped by racial identity and inequality. Thus, it is not that talking about barbecue and sports in itself is a marker of Whiteness, but the fact that members of the NCC constantly foreground this particular form of Texan identity as a professional identity *and* negate discussions about race that mark this chamber as a White chamber of commerce in this business community.

In the following analysis, I first present two examples where NCC members engage in colorblind discourses. In one example, a chamber member in a committee meeting describes the chamber as being affiliated with an older, White, male identity and then uses colorblind discourses when discussing how to change this age, racial, and gender make-up of the chamber. In a second example, during a lunch meeting, a chamber member uses vague, colorblind terms to discuss diversity in Texas. Second, I present two examples that illustrate how chamber members foreground a (masculine) Texan identity as a relevant, taken for granted professional identity in their organization. This set of examples includes a barbecue planning committee meeting where members index White southern masculinity through discussion of barbecuing logistics and a public event where a speaker from Massachusetts is ostracized for not being a Texan and then invokes fatherhood as an identity to connect with his Texan audience. Third, I present examples from minority members of the business community that shed light on why these discourses, and this organization, is positioned as White in this community. These include an example where the president of the Asian American Chamber, Alf, discusses the importance of diversity for most businesses in Texas and an example where an African American business man describes the stigma associated with the NCC because the NCC does *not* value diversity. I conclude by arguing that the communication practices in the NCC, although well-intentioned and seemingly neutral, do in fact reflect and reproduce a racial hierarchy that values Whiteness as a hegemonic identity.

A. Colorblind Discourses in the NCC

1. "That's not what business looks like": Youth as a colorblind index for diversity

The following two examples illustrate how chamber members use colorblind discourses when talking about racial difference and diversity. The first example is an excerpt from an audio-recorded meeting of the Young Professionals Committee, one of the many committees in which North City Chamber members can choose to participate (examples of other committees include the Small Business Committee, the Education Committee, the Transportation Committee). The Young Professionals committee is targeted towards business professionals under 40 years old, but is open to NCC members of all ages. The purpose of this particular committee meeting was to reevaluate the purpose of the Young Professionals Committee and discuss strategies for gaining members. Each committee has a staff member assigned to attend committee meetings and facilitate and programs or events that committees would like to plan. George, the Director of Marketing and Events for the NCC staff, is the staff member who attends Young Professional Committee meetings.

Below, George is explaining to members of the Young Professionals Committee why the chamber started this particular committee. There are a total of eight attendees at this meeting: George, the staff member in charge of guiding members of this committee, Stacy, the head of the Young Professionals committee, three other female attendees, two other male attendees, and myself. All attendees, except for George, are between 20-30 years old, and all attendees other than me are White Texans.

Example 5.1
```
1   George    One of the reasons that-th-this the chamber came up with this is (.)
2             and I'll be real honest because I'm in that category was a bunch of
3             (.) (hh) (.) fifty plus (.) white men [runnin the whole chamber] what
              it looked like
4   Stacy                                      [((burst of loud laughter))]
5   George    And that's [not what business looks like (.) [like this is
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6	Stacy	[oh (.) it [it's not
7	George	Like this is (.) the operative word
8	Stacy	hehe
9	George	in chamber of commerce is commerce (.) and [so
10	Stacy	[okay
11	George	how do we make that work and who's the face of that that's why=
12	Stacy	=okay=
13	George	=things like (.) we did first Tuesday with a panel of people that were (.)
14		thirty and forty (.)
15	Stacy	[Mhmm
16	George	[running businesses (.) this is about changing the character of what this is (.)
17		you guys are really at the leading edge of that (.)[and you get to do that=
18	Joe	[Umm
19	Mary	=Well is there any-I'm sorry

George enacts his professional affiliation with the chamber as a staff member by speaking on behalf of the "chamber" (line 1) to explain why they "came up with this", the Young Professionals Committee. Other members of the Young Professionals Committee work for companies that are members of the chamber and volunteer their time to serve on the Young Professionals Committee. They, therefore, are not necessarily aware of how the North City Chamber functions as an organization and the role of the Young Professionals Committee within the chamber.

George then uses a disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975), "I'll be real honest because I'm in that category" (lines 1-2), in addition to multiple pauses and laughter, which function to mark his upcoming utterance, "fifty plus white men runnin the chamber what it looked like" (lines 2-3), as an out of the ordinary utterance. This utterance is the only time where any chamber staff member mentions that this chamber is perceived as a "White" chamber of commerce and illustrates that the chamber staff and board must be aware of this perception if they started a Young Professional's Committee for this reason. George's disclaimer also functions to position save his own face (Goffman, 1955). First, in his disclaimer, George positions himself as someone who is "real honest". While honesty is generally a positively valued identity, George adds the descriptor "real" to indicate that he is aware that there is such a thing as being "too honest" and that in his upcoming utterance he will be "real honest". Furthermore, by positioning himself as

honest, George saves face by associating a positive identity quality with himself before fellow interlocutors can put forth alternate, possibly negative evaluations.

In addition to positioning himself in a positively valued way, George's disclaimer also functions to mark his upcoming actions permissible to say in this context. George uses a credentialing disclaimer that establishes "special qualifications or credentials that, he implies, permit him to engage in the act" (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975, p. 4). Because George is "in that category", which he later names as the "fifty plus white men" category, he has special qualifications that allow him to overtly discuss "that category". Thus, George positions his upcoming utterance as non-normative primarily because of the "category" that he will mention, marks this action as permissible because he is a member of that "category", and ultimately saves face despite taking a potentially face-threatening action.

George then states the category, "fifty plus white men" (lines 2-3). There is a noticeable pause after George states the age "fifty plus" during which there is silence, and Stacy's laughter (line 4) occurs immediately after George states "White men". Here, George is breaking with the norms for colorblindness usually followed by North City Chamber members when he explicitly mentions race. He therefore delays mentioning race (Bucholtz 2011) by using a disclaimer, pauses, and hedging. These actions, in combination with Stacy's laughter following George's mention of race, mark the mention of race as out of the ordinary. Again, racial identity is never discussed in this chamber of commerce, and all the interactional work done around the mention of a racial category illustrates the uncommonness of explicit reference to race among these chamber members.

Although George's utterance lists three different identity categories, age ("fifty plus"), race ("white"), and gender ("men") as constituting the normative NCC professional identity (people who "run the chamber"), in his disclaimer he orients to these categories as being one category (e.g., "I'm in that category"). George then states that the reason the chamber formed the Young Professionals Committee was to change what it "looked like" (line 3) to more closely

resemble what "business looks like" (line 5). "Fifty plus White men" is positioned as a professional identity of the past (what the chamber "*looked* like") and not an appropriate identity for the present ("not what business *looks* like"). The name of the Young Professionals Committee illustrates that the chamber orients to age as the defining quality of "that category" (which includes three identity categories but is oriented to as being one category). Thus, by focusing on altering just age, the chamber can successfully change its look.

The reason chamber members explicitly name age ("young") as a professional category and not gender or race can be explained by the norm George stated in his disclaimer: generally it is not permissible to discuss anyone's race and gender as relevant to professional identities, but if one *must* mention these categories, one can only mention his or her own category (e.g., because I'm White I can talk about White people). Thus, chamber members cannot include non-White or non-male categories in the name of the committee since many members are White and male. An additional explanation is that chamber members are orienting to White male identities as normative and therefore more inclusive identities, and other identities (e.g., women, minority) as marked and therefore exclusive. Thus, chamber members, in choosing the name "Young Professionals" are engaging in colorblind and genderblind discourses that reproduce the hegemonic position of a White male professional identity in their organization.

Despite the fact that gender is not a referenced in the name of the Young Professionals Committee, the majority of committee members and committee leadership are White women. Furthermore, George is addressing young, White women in this meeting. In this interaction, Stacy, the young White female leader of the committee, agrees with George's claim that "fifty plus White men" is "not what business looks like" ("oh it, it's not", line 6). In saying "it's not", Stacy is not only agreeing with George's claim but is also speaking as a young female professional and as the leader of the Young Professionals Committees, which is made up of mostly females. Thus, although "young professional" does not explicitly acknowledge gender as a relevant category, it is still read as inclusive of both (White) men and women and thus is

successful in adding gender diversity to the chamber. Furthermore, the chamber has many board members and regular members that are female, which also positions this chamber as inclusive of both men and women.

The category that is not represented at all, in terms of explicit acknowledgement or through participation in the chamber, is race. George temporarily makes race visible by naming "White" as a racial category that applies to chamber members. However, the category is not made explicit in the name of the young professionals committee, nor are there young, minority professionals in the committee to help change the "look" of the chamber. This is an example of engaging in colorblind discourses, where mostly White chamber members do not mention race in an effort to be neutral and in doing so inadvertently reproduce a White professional identity as normative in their organization.

George enacts his role as representative of the chamber through his next utterance where he explains that the main focus of a chamber is "commerce", and two important aspects of commerce are business practices ("how do we make that work", line 11) and who practices them ("who's the face of that", line 11). George again emphasizes that integral to business is not just how it operates but how it looks. However, his use of the phrase "who's the face" is ambiguous and erases race (Bucholtz, 2011b) by not naming any particular social identities that might constitute professional identities. George then explains one way the chamber is trying to engage in changing the "face" of business in their organization: they recently held a panel in which young "people", ages "thirty and forty", talked about "running businesses"(lines 13-14). Thus, in the past, it "looked like" "fifty plus White men" were "runnin the chamber", but more recently the chamber held a panel of "thirty to forty" year old "people" who were "running" their own businesses. Again, we see that while George explicitly named the past identity, he uses the vague term "people" and only specifies their age when discussing the recent panel (incidentally, the panel included three White male speakers).

George then provides an evaluation (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) of his short narrative about the panel: "this is about changing the character of what this is". Here, George links business practices ("running businesses"), the age of business professionals ("thirty and forty"), and other unspecified identities ("face", "people") as constituting the "character" of business ("what this is"). Thus, the way a company "looks" has a moral value, and by changing something on the outside (its "looks") the chamber is committing to change something more deeply about itself as a business (its "character"). Moreover, by changing its character, the chamber is more accurately reflecting changes in the business community ("what business looks like"). George then addresses his mostly female interlocutors using the pronoun "you guys" and characterizes them as leaders ("being at the leading edge") who have an opportunity ("you get to do that") to change the chamber's character. Again, although George has not explicitly mentioned gender and even uses "guys" as a form of address, in speaking to a mostly female group and positioning them as leaders, he is implying that these young female professionals, if they are not already, have the potential to be at the forefront of business.

2. "Interesting fabric of folks": Colorblind Metaphors of Difference

This excerpt is another example where members of the NCC use vague, ambiguous terms to explicitly discuss ethnic and racial difference. Furthermore, while the previous excerpt illustrates that age is an acceptable difference to talk about, the below excerpt illustrates how regional difference is oriented to as being acceptable to discuss. This audio-recorded excerpt is from a lunch meeting with Frank, the president of the chamber, Elizabeth, Chair of the Board for the chamber and the Senior Vice President of a regionally based real-estate firm, Mark, the head of a local hospital, a board member of the chamber, and the host of the lunch, and a new potential board member whom I call Joe. Joe is the head of a large, regionally based insurance company. He is originally from Texas, lived in both Atlanta (Georgia) and Nashville (Tennessee) for his job, and has recently returned to Texas. The purpose of this meeting is for Frank, Elizabeth, and Mark to sell the benefits of the chamber to Joe. Frank, Elizabeth, and Mark want to recruit Joe as

a board member because he is the head of a prestigious insurance company. In this excerpt, Joe

discusses the challenges he faced as a business man in Nashville because it was a closed, non-

diverse community, and Elizabeth responds by describing the diversity in Texas:

Example 5.2

1	Joe	I didn't know anyone and I had to get to know everyone.
2	Others	Mhmm
3	Joe	And that was a very hard thing to do in a city where (.) they wanna
4		know your last name and they wanna know (.) you know (.) what
5		farm your family grew up on
		Omitted conversation where Joe discusses a conversation he had with
		a local who wanted to know his family background.
10	Elizabeth	Well it's probably refreshing for you to be in a place where (.) o:ne
11		and a ha:lf out of every:: (.) u:h (.) you know (.) four people you meet
12		(.) is from (.) a hundred mile radius of here=
13	Frank	=Yeah=
14	Elizabeth	=Which means the vast majority are not.
15	Frank and Mark	Yeah
16	Elizabeth	They all bring something different from the table (.) to the table.
17		They're all (.) you know (.) ehh (.) interesting fabric of folks. I mean
18		even (.) even folks like Mark ((addresses Mark directly))
19	Mark	Oh my gosh
20	Elizabeth	Who [(.) you know
21	Frank	[He's been here (.) multiple generations
22	Mark	((inaudible))
23	Elizabeth	Grow up here (.) and move away (.) and come back. I mean (.) when
24		(.) in parts like in in I think in the the deep south states Tennessee,
25		Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia. When you have two major schools in
26		the state (.) and y-you gotta go to one or the other there's just not a
27		lot. Over a long period of time, there's not a lot of diversity
28	Frank	Yeah
29	Elizabeth	and it's hard to be (.) a business executive who moves into the city
30		and they're like, "well that's an outsider".

      Prior to this excerpt Joe discusses the lack of "diversity" (he uses this term) in Nashville,

Tennessee, the place he worked before moving to Texas. He marks this lack of diversity as a

challenge when he states he "had to get to know everyone" and this was "hard" (line 1) because

the city was full of locals who had lived in the city for generations, and hence know one another

by "last name" or by "farms" (lines 4-5). Joe is implicitly defining "diversity" in terms of locals

vs outsiders. A place is diverse if its population is made up of people from different places. Joe

then tells a story about a conversation he had with someone in Nashville who asked him about his

family lineage (omitted). Then, Elizabeth, the chair of the board, replies to him and discusses how

"diversity" in Texas is different from "diversity" in Tennessee. Elizabeth is from Alabama, which both she and Joe acknowledge (earlier in this conversation) as being part of the Deep South and therefore similar to Tennessee. Elizabeth is speaking as someone who is from the Deep South and has moved to Texas and also as a successful business person.

Elizabeth characterizes the current "place" (Texas) as somewhere where "the vast majority" of "people" are not from the area (lines 10-14). She positions this as "refreshing" for "you" (Joe), who is concerned about moving into a business community where he might be seen as an outsider. Both Frank, the president of the chamber, and Mark, a chamber board member, affirm Elizabeth's claim (lines 4, 6). Elizabeth uses the pronoun "they all" as an index for "people" in this "place", most of who are not from this place. She then characterizes these people as all "bringing something different…to the table" (line 16). This is popular jargon used when businesses discuss the benefits of diversity when working in groups or teams. When there are different types of people in an organization, they bring different ideas and experiences, and these different ideas often help businesses to approach and solve problems more successfully. Thus, Elizabeth ties a diversity of people from different places as being good for two reasons: Joe will easily be able to make contacts in the community and Joe will find better employees and contacts who "bring something different" to business.

Elizabeth again uses "they" and then uses multiple pauses and hedges ("you know", "ehh") which mark her upcoming utterance as potentially face-threatening. She then settles on the phrase, "interesting fabric of folks" to characterize "they". Here, Elizabeth uses a metaphor (fabric) to discuss difference (different people are woven together in a fabric, and this fabric is interesting) in a positive, yet vague way. Elizabeth's hedging indicates that she is struggling with an acceptable way to talk about difference and her choice of words conforms to norms for colorblindness in the NCC. Elizabeth then provides concrete examples to compare people in Texas and in the Deep South.

First, Elizabeth uses one of the current interlocutors Mark, as an example of "folks" in the area that contribute to the "interesting fabric". Mark, and "folks like" him, have been "here" for "multiple generations" (line 12) and have "grown up here" (line 23). Mark, however, was also able to move away and "come back" to the area. Thus, Elizabeth is marking the "place" or "here" as encompassing difference not just because many people are not from the area but also because many locals have experience living in other areas. Elizabeth juxtaposes these types of "folks" and this "place" to "parts in the deep south" (line 24). Elizabeth states that there are "two major schools [colleges] in the state", and because people "gotta" attend one of the two schools, "there is not a lot of" "diversity" "over a long period of time" (lines 26-27). Here, Elizabeth positions colleges in the Deep South as institutions that keep people within a community. In Texas, however, people are able to leave and come back (in the way that Mark was able to do). Elizabeth then connects "diversity" in Texas and a lack of diversity in the Deep South to the identity of a "business executive who moves into the city" (line 29). Someone who moves to a Deep South city would face difficulties and would be labeled by people in the city as an "outsider" (line 30).

Overall, this excerpt illustrates that, in the NCC, it is permissible for people to characterize different groups and places if they have had personal experiences in those places. Joe, for example, worked in Nashville and therefore can identify Nashville as a community that is closed to outsiders, thus providing challenges for Joe (a Texan) to form contacts and conduct business. Elizabeth, who is from Alabama, draws similarities between Alabama and Tennessee (both Deep South states) and is therefore able to discuss and evaluate communities in the Deep South. Elizabeth also draws on her experiences living and working in Texas to characterize the people as being a mix of outsiders and locals, and she uses a current interlocutor, Mark, to illustrate that locals also are well traveled. Elizabeth does not mention any other forms of difference but rather uses vague metaphors (e.g., "interesting fabric of folks", "everyone brings something different") to talk about the local, Texas community. This is mostly likely because, as George stated, a norm in this chamber is to not talk about groups or people of which one is not a

member. Furthermore, Elizabeth's interactional goal is to address Joe's concerns about fitting into the business community, and Joe, as a White male, does not need to know about gender or racial diversity in the business community (e.g., Elizabeth could and may discuss gender diversity when recruiting a female board member). Thus, through these colorblind discourses, Elizabeth participates in reproducing Whiteness as a normative identity for this chamber of commerce.

B. Enacting a Texan Identity

1. "Calling Cousin Joe": Southern Masculinity and Barbecue Planning

This example illustrates how White, male, Texan chamber members index a southern, White, masculine identity as a normative professional identity for the chamber while planning a barbecue battle event. This audio recorded excerpt is from a Barbecue Planning Committee meeting. The North City Chamber is planning their first public event and has chosen to plan a barbecue battle, similar to other chambers of commerce located in rural Texas towns. The chamber is holding the event in a parking lot in an area of North City that the chamber is trying to revitalize. Local businesses, both members and non-members of the chamber, pay a fee to rent a spot in this parking lot and participate in the barbecue battle. The chamber provided beans, ribs, and brisket for the competing companies, and companies brought in their own cooking materials (e.g., grills, spices, pots). The chamber recruited local city officials to taste and judge the entries from different organizations. Prizes were given in the form of trophies made by a local craftsperson for best beans, best ribs, best brisket, and best display. This event helped the chamber gain visibility in the community, allowed the chamber to recruit new members by inviting them to participate in the barbecue, and helped chamber members who participated to increase their visibility and network with other participating businesses.

The choice to have this event in particular indexes southern White masculinity as a normative identity for the chamber. Barbecuing is a southern tradition, and although it is practiced by people of all races, the other ethnically based chambers of commerce do not hold barbecue cook-offs. The Black Chamber, for example, holds events that focus on the education

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of their members (e.g., teaching entrepreneurs how to start a business) and education for their community more generally (e.g., providing college scholarships for African American students so they can become educated members of the workforce). Holding a barbecuing event, therefore, is an index of a White Texan identity not because of the barbecue itself but because of the privilege this organization has to focus on a 'fun' barbecuing event instead of an event that helps support disadvantaged members of their community. In addition, this event was planned by and mostly attended by White men.

Furthermore, barbecuing is often done by men and is popularly thought of as a masculine form of cooking associated with grills and the outdoors. This event is also a competition, which is an index hegemonic masculinity, where men try and establish dominance through displaying barbecuing skill. Both men and women in this chamber position the barbecue battle event as a masculine event. For example, Elizabeth, the chair of the board from the chamber called this event the "bad boy barbecue thing" in one of the meetings where she promoted the event. Furthermore, female judges at the event asked for the addition of a dessert for the following year's barbecue battle, claiming that women in particular would appreciate a dessert. Thus, the choice of the event as the main public annual event for the chamber, the way it was planned, the food served at the event, and the mostly White male attendance indexes White, southern, masculinity as a normative, supposedly inclusive, hegemonic professional identity, one supported by White Texan men and women alike.

The below excerpt is from a planning meeting at the beginning stages of the barbecue event. The meeting included a total of nine participants: Frank, the president of the chamber, George and Brian, the chamber staff members in charge of planning the event, three additional men who are board members of the chamber, two women on speakerphone, and me. Members of the planning committee and chamber members in general have been asked to recruit clients and contacts from local businesses to participate in the barbecue. Shannon, a chamber member and employee at Capital One, is asking the chamber staff for more information about the barbecue

event so he knows how to sell the event to his clients. Other participants in the below interaction

include Frank, the president of the chamber, and George, the director of marketing and events for

the chamber and also the main person in charge of planning the barbecue.

Example 5.3

1	Shannon	I just think being armed with that is (.) we'll get fewer people who say don't
2		use my name (.) because <u>now</u> at least I know what to expect I can go to
3		someone and say (.) this is what we're participating in with capital <u>one</u>
4	Frank	Yeah
5	Shannon	and I'll just go to my customers and say (.) [you know
6	Frank	[right
7	Shannon	I'd like you to be there=
8	Frank	=right=
9	Shannon	=here's what we <u>have</u>
10	George	well it-
11	Frank	yeah
12	George	it's [real
13	Shannon	[Here's what you need to <u>do</u>. What you need to <u>bring</u>
14	Frank	Yeah
15	Shannon	You put this together and using probably calling cousin Jake and have him
16	Frank	yea(h)h
17	Shannon	have that cooker sent over or whatever I mean. They just need to know that
18	Frank	Yeah
19	Shannon	So that's what I've been kinda <u>wait</u>ing for
20	George	Okay
21	Shannon	so I can really go out and sell this thing because I really don't know what
22		capital <u>one</u> needs to do
23	Frank	[Yeah good thank you.]
24	George	[⁰Right, that's a good point⁰]
25	Frank	An-and to <u>your</u> point there Shannon you know <u>yeah</u> it's nice when you've got
26		a-a nice cooker like Jay's got or like cousin (.) cousin whoever has (.) uh but
27		there will be <u>some</u> that show up and they might have three or four <u>webe</u>rs (.)
28		you know and do it that way so y-you can <u>do</u> it kind you know of <u>deluxe</u> (.)
29		but you can also [do it
30	Shannon	[Also knowing how much meat I have to c↑ook
31	Multiple	right, yeah, well exactly

Shannon's first several turns (lines 1-13) involve Shannon speaking as both a planner and

a participant in the barbecue. Shannon says that he needs to know more details about barbecuing

logistics (lines 1-3) both for himself as a participant (line 3) and so he can tell others who he

recruits to participate in the barbecue (lines 2-13). Then, in line 14, Shannon positions southern

masculinity as part of the professional identity (e.g., a representative of a chamber and of Capital

One) that he has constructed. Shannon uses reported speech to illustrate how he would tell his

customers about the barbecue (you put this together", line 15) and then uses the metaphor, "calling cousin Jake" (line 15), someone who can send you a "cooker". "Cousin Jake" is not a real person, but a metaphor for a "cousin" that lives in the country that would be able to provide a "cooker" for a barbecue. Shannon's utterance indexes his knowledge about his customers: that they are all Texans with family in Texas who live in the country and could provide a cooker for a barbecue competition. Frank's confirmation and laughter (line 16) indexes that he also shares this understanding about "cousin Jake" and marks the mentioning of "cousin Jake" as normative. Furthermore, "Jake" is a male cousin, thus indexing the masculinity associated with barbecuing and cooking. Thus, Shannon and Frank's interaction intertwines a local Texan, masculine identity with Shannon's customers', the barbecue participants', and Frank's professional identities.

After several more turns, Frank responds to Shannon, orienting to them as an argument Shannon is making ("to your point there, Shannon", line 25). Frank states that it's "nice" when "you've got a nice cooker", here indexing common knowledge about what kind of cooker might be "nice". Frank uses Jay, a member of the chamber, as an example of someone who has a "nice cooker". He also uses Shannon's metaphor, but cannot recall the name of the cousin Shannon mentioned (evidenced by the pause "cousin (.) cousin", line 26). Frank marks the name of the cousin as unimportant by using the term "whoever", which further illustrates that "cousin Jake" is a metaphor, and that "Jake" is symbolic of "whoever" someone may have as a cousin in the country.

Frank also indexes shared knowledge that both Shannon and Frank and others in the interaction share: for a barbecue battle, people need a "nice cooker". Some people (like Jay) have a "nice cooker", while others call "cousin whoever" who lives in the country and can send a "nice cooker" for the competition. Frank opposes people who have a "nice cooker" to people who have "three or four Webers" (line 27). A Weber is a brand name for a small grill used for barbecuing in the backyard. It takes "three or four" Webers to cook the same amount of meat as one "nice cooker", and "nice cookers" also cook a better quality of meat than "Webers". Frank then uses

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parallel grammatical structure, and labels cooking with a "nice cooker" as "deluxe" (line 28) and

opposes this ("but") to cooking with Webers, which is also a permissible option ("you can also").

Frank is expanding on the type of people who might participate in this barbecue by pointing out

that not everyone have "cousin Jake's" the way Shannon assumed. However, in doing so, Frank

uses jargon that indexes shared knowledge about types of cookers used for barbecuing, thus

illustrating that members in this chamber take for granted southern, masculine identities as

normative in their organization. Last, Shannon asks Frank (line 29) about "how much meat I have

to cook" (line 30) and is met with agreement by multiple others in the meeting (line 31). The

shared agreement by others in the meeting indexes shared knowledge about barbecuing planning,

thus reproducing southern masculinity as a hegemonic professional identity category.

2. "I've got three daughters so": Fatherhood as a shared professional identity

The following example illustrates how a speaker from Boston who is positioned as an

outsider by chamber members invokes White, masculine identities and successfully establishes

similarities with his White, Texan, mostly male audience. The speaker is Connor, the newly

appointed CEO of the City Airport. Connor is a White male from Boston, Massachusetts, who

most recently lived in Australia working for Virgin Airlines. Connor just recently moved to Texas

as new CEO of the airport. The North City Chamber invited Connor to be the speaker at their

annual aviation event. Each year, the North City Chamber puts on a series of events to talk about

important issues for businesses in the city (e.g., economy, human resources, energy, aviation).

The purpose of the aviation event is to keep the members updated with developments in the City

Airport so that they can tell their clients about ease of transportation to the city, the convenience

of the airport, and generally seem informed about what goes on in the city. It also helps provide a

public presence for the North City Chamber.

This event was one of the few events attended by members of the Asian American

Chamber of Commerce (the other chamber that I observed). While the North City Chamber and

the Asian American Chamber staff members do know one another, they rarely attend one

another's events. The Asian American Chamber gave money to help sponsor this event and

therefore had a table reserved and was named at the beginning of the event as one of the many

event sponsors. The Asian American Chamber asked me to sit at their table for the event. It was

the only table with non-white people at the event. This event took place on the main floor of an

Aviation museum in the city during breakfast. Attendees arrived, sat at round tables, ate

breakfast, and then listened to the CEO's speech. There were about 150-200 attendees sitting at

round tables in front of a raised area (where Connor would later speak). Attendees ate breakfast

and made small talk with one another, listened to the speeches, and afterward networked with

other attendees. The following is an excerpt from a chamber member's introduction of Connor

followed by an excerpt of Connor's speech. Connor is discussing the changes he will make as the

new CEO of the City Airport:

Example 5.4		
1	Bill	Despite the fact that he's a Boston Red Sox fan and from Massachusetts. Uh
2		he is coming around to the football team and the baseball team slowly but
3		surely (.) and he has an extensive background (.) in taking what was already
4		a great airport and we think he'll take it to the next level. Connor is married.
5		He has five kids. He's a-like our Mayor he's a graduate of Boston University
6		(.) and we are delighted to have him <u>here</u> as our CEO.
		Connor gives a speech about what he plans to do as CEO and incorporates
		the following story about 7 minutes into his speech when he is discussing the
		importance of customer service
7	Connor	But (.) we have to do more than just build and construct. We also must meet
8		the needs and wants of our passengers today and for the next four years.
9		That means we have to continuously improve the customer experience for
10		our passengers. We have a great base to work off, given the sincerity and
11		friendliness that I have witnessed in this region. On a personal note (.) the
12		community has welcomed my family (.) and made our transition back to the
13		states easy (.) as I spent the last three years in Australia. We're delighted to
14		be back in the US.
15		I have to make a comment though here (.) in terms of um (.) the hospitality.
16		Um (.) you can tell (.) I'm a um (.) I'm a Yankee. I'm a US citizen. I don't-I
17		don't have an Australian accent. Our kids (.) don't have an Australian
18		accent. My twenty year old daughter (.) who's in college in Boston came
19		home for the holidays (.) was invited to a party. She went to the party. A
20		young man comes up to her and they're talking and she says, 'we just moved
21		here from Australia' and they're talking, and the young man says to her 'I
22		think your accent's really sexy'
23	Audience	((laughter))
24	Connor	So when it comes to hospitality (.) I'm going to keep a very close eye on the
25		young men in Texas because I've got three daughters so

26   Audience   ((laughter))
27   Connor   But (.) staying on the customer side, what are we focused on?

After introducing Connor by his full name, Bill characterizes Connor as being an outsider to the Texas community, citing Connor as a "Boston Red Sox fan" (baseball team) and being from "Massachusetts" (line 1), and juxtaposes this against Texas football and baseball sports teams (line 2). Connor is expected to "slowly but surely" (line 2) change his sports affiliation because he moved to Texas. Here, Bill is affiliating regional difference with sports teams and in using sports as a marker of regional identity, Bill is invoking masculinity as being central to one's regional affiliation. Bill then describes one of Connor's professional qualities, having "an extensive background", and positions Connor as having a professional identity that will compliment an already "great airport" and take it "to the next level" (lines 3-4). Bill then invokes masculinity again when positioning Connor as a husband ("married") and father ("has five kids") (line 4). Unlike the previous identities Bill mentioned (Connor's regional identity and his professional qualifications), Bill does not establish a difference between Connor and Texans when discussing family. Family is something that both the audience and Connor share. Bill finishes his introduction by providing information about Connor's education at Boston University, tying this education to a Texas identity because the mayor of a Texas City attended that university, and welcoming Connor as CEO (lines 5-6).

In his introduction, Bill weaves together regional identity (Texan, Massachusetts), masculinity (sports fan, husband, father), and professional identity (background, education, and CEO). This illustrates how qualities popularly thought of as personal (e.g., where someone is from, their family life) do in fact constitute one's professional identity. By publicly communicating these identities as an important part of Connor's professional identity, Bill is positioning Texan masculinity as a normative professional identity category for this organization. Furthermore, Bill's introduction resembles most introductions in the North City Chamber (introduces a White male speaker, discusses professional qualifications and family background).

The only thing non-normative about this speaker is that he is not a Texan, and Bill marks this quality as non-normative by joking about it.

Connor starts his speech by discussing airport construction and infrastructure (e.g., building new terminals), and then he transitions to talking about customer service (lines 7-8). Connor uses "we" to index the Airport as an organization and states a goal of this organization: "to continuously improve the customer experience for our passengers" (lines 9-10). Connor then ties customer service to the regional identity of the area, citing his own experiences with "sincerity and friendliness…in this region" (line 11). Connor then uses his family as a specific, "personal" (line 12) example of friendliness. He points out how "the community has welcomed my family" (line 12) and made the transition of moving back to the US from Australia "easy" (line 13). Connor then uses "we" again, this time to index his family and discuss their "delight" to return to the US. Connor, therefore, is able to use "we" to position himself as a member of the airport and as a member of his family, thus weaving together his professional and family identities.

Connor then shifts from speaking as a CEO to telling a personal story. Connor frames his upcoming utterances as being about "hospitality (line 16) and then proceeds into starting a personal story. Connor starts his narrative with an orientation (Labov & Waletzky, 1967), by naming the characters (himself and his daughter) and explaining relevant details about these characters. Connor labels himself as a "Yankee" (someone from the northern part of the United States), a "US citizen", and as not having an "Australian accent" despite having lived in Australia for several years (lines 16-17). Connor then indexes his identity as a father by talking about his "kids" and how they do "not have an Australian accent" (lines 17-18). He specifically discusses his daughter (lines 18-19), a college student who came to Texas from Boston for the holidays. Connor relays how his daughter talked to a "young man" at the party and uses reported speech to voice his daughter as saying "we just moved here from Australia" (line 21) to which the "young man" replied "I think your accent's really sexy" (line 22). Similar to other findings about personal

storytelling, Connor uses reported speech to voice the main point of the story, one which warrants audience response (Bauman, 2000). Connor's story receives a preferred response, laughter, from the many other fathers in the audience. Connor continues by providing the evaluation of his story, again referencing "hospitality" and speaking as a father who will "keep a very close eye on the young men in Texas" because he has three daughters (lines 24-25). After further laughter from the audience, Connor transitions back to discussing the "customer side", using "we" to position himself as CEO of the airport.

In this example, Bill positions Connor as an outsider because Connor does not share the Texan identity with members of the NCC. While this does not seem to be a divisive identity (the audience is still accepting of Connor), Connor still does identity-work in his speech to connect with his audience. He does so by foregrounding his identities as a father and husband. Connor's narrative also implicitly foregrounds a White identity. Whiteness is ideologically associated with a higher class of people (Bailey, 2010), and Connor's family, who has lived in Australia and has now moved back to the United States, has experienced a privileged form of immigration, one that is not experienced by most non-White people who move to different parts of the world.

In addition to Connor's communication practices, the White masculine identity of this event is reinforced by the presence of the audience, who was mostly White males. I was sitting at the Asian American Chamber table and asked one of their board members, who was usually social at Asian Chamber events, whether he would network with other attendees. He looked at me and said, "No" and stated that this was a "different crowd". Thus, the attendance of the event and Bill's and Connor's speeches reproduced a southern, White, male professional identity for the organization. The fact that the only non-white people attending the event did not feel comfortable networking with the other attendees made the exclusionary function of Whiteness temporarily visible.

C. Minority Characterizations of Whiteness

These first several excerpts have illustrated how members of the North City Chamber implicitly reproduce Whiteness as a hegemonic professional identity category by engaging in colorblind discourses and through constructing southern masculinity as central to their professional identities. The following examples establish the importance of race and ethnic diversity in this business community and illustrate how minority members evaluate the North City Chamber of Commerce as a White organization, in part, because the North City Chamber does not concern itself with issues of diversity and inclusion. Thus, the NCC's communication practices can be interpreted as a *choice* that the NCC makes to ignore diversity in a racially diverse business community that places value on explicitly acknowledging it.

The following example illustrates how, by not participating in any diversity initiatives or acknowledging racial diversity at any point, the North City Chamber is deviating from what is popular and expected in the Big City business community. In the below excerpt, Alf, the president of the Asian American Chamber of Commerce, explains the importance of diversity and inclusion and diversity talk for businesses in the Big City community. Alf and I had just attended an event at the City Airport where all the airport's senior Vice Presidents discussed the importance of diversity and invited minority and women-owned businesses to apply for contracts offered by the airport (e.g., contracts to open shops in the airport, work on airport IT, help construct new wings, etc.). After attending events with members of both chambers, members would often debrief me on what they saw as important about that particular event. The following is an excerpt of Alf's 'debrief' about the event he and I just attended at the airport:

Example 5.5
```
1    Alf       In Big City (.) it's a very strong I think there's a strong move to really do the (.)
2              they call it D-I. Diversity and Inclusion.
3    Natasha   Mhmm
4              And if you don't have that in your organization (.) it seems like you are
5              ostraci(h)(h)zed. haha.
6    Natasha   Yeah
7    Alf       So everybody is uh invoking that name. Diversity, diversity.
8    Natasha   Mhmm
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9	Alf	Besides Big City is one those cities that really embrace like (.) international and
10		diversity mm programs and concepts. (4.0) So airport (.) they have created a
11		whole department just for that.
12	Natasha	Yeah
13	Alf	Diversity. The *(city public transport)* created their own department (2.0) Big City
14		(2.0) So most of the (.) public agency partners we have (.) they have diversity.
15		Now the private corporations follow them. Pepsico, TI. They have their diversity
16		department. And it came almost like (.) coming national now. It's getting merits
17		by the federal because the federal also (.) imposed somehow, like if you're
18		getting federal grants, you're getting federal money, you have to have diversity,
19		minority participation (.) in those projects. Otherwise you don't get it.
20	Natasha	Mhmm
21	Alf	(4.0) Now in the east coast I don't know hahaha.

Alf characterizes "Big City" as being a "strong" supporter of "diversity and inclusion" initiatives (lines 1-2). He states that if a business does not "have that", then they are "ostracized" (lins 4-5). In other words, businesses are supposed to have diversity initiatives in order to be an accepted business in the Big City business community. Alf then characterizes these diversity initiatives as being directly related to a type of talk heard in organizations, "everybody uh is invoking that name. Diversity, Diversity," (line 7). Diversity, therefore, is not just a policy that exists but is also directly connected to the type of communication practiced by organizational members. Alf continues by again emphasizing that "Big City", in particular "embraces international and diversity programs" (lines 9-10). He then lists multiple companies (e.g., airport, public transportation, the City itself, Pepsico, TI) that have "departments" just for "diversity" (lines 10-16). He also discusses how on a national level, if businesses want federal grants, then they need "to have diversity, minority participation" in the projects that they propose. For example, if the Big City public transportation wants to build more railways, they need to provide at least 10% of the work (e.g., to design the rails, construct the rails, do electronics) to minority and women owned businesses (e.g., engineering firms, construction firms). Alf closes by again constructing diversity as important in Big City in particular by saying that he does not know how valued diversity might be in the "east coast" (line 21), where he knew I was attending graduate school.

Most AACC events I attended *and* events that AACC members attended included explicit talk about valuing diversity. There were some events, like the Asian Festival and the Multi-Ethnic Mixer where members of the AACC explicitly foregrounded ethnic diversity as central to the event. Other events were held for purely business purposes, but were constructed as diversity related by the White, non-AACC members speaking at the event. For example, the AACC invited the head of IT for the local school district to tell their members (many of whom do IT and technical work) about opportunities to apply for contracts to do IT for the school district. The IT worker discussed opportunities for contracts *and* discussed how the school district values diversity and wants minority owned businesses to apply. Finally, there were events held by the diversity departments of large corporations specifically to reach out to diverse members of the business community and offer them opportunities (like the Airport event Alf and I attended). From Alf's viewpoint, every business he works with tends to place a value on diversity.

Alf's general comments about how diversity is valued by Big City businesses fall in line with an African American business man's specific characterization of the North City Chamber. The following example is from field notes I wrote down immediately after a conversation I had with this man, whom I call "Jamal". I met Jamal through Alf at a public event. I told Jamal about my project, and when I mentioned the North City Chamber, he immediately characterized them in the following way:

> "The North City Chamber has a negative stigma associated with it because in all its years it has never had a person of color chair. In 2014 businesses have to have that and focus on diversity. They definitely court potential chairs and board members. All chambers, and all businesses do, so why have they not reached out to the community?"

Like Alf, Jamal emphasizes diversity as important to businesses, and characterizes diversity as part of being a *modern* business, a business in the year 2014 (when this data was gathered). He specifically states that the NCC has a "negative stigma" because they do not have a "focus on diversity". The NCC is responsible for "reaching out" and "courting" minority members for their board, and has failed to do so and therefore is being judged negatively as a business. Important to

note is that Jamal attributes the NCC's racial make-up (e.g., no board members of color) to the types of communication they practice (e.g., they do not "reach out" or "court" "board members of color").Therefore, the NCC, in Jamal's eyes, does not just "happen to have" mostly White members, but has these members as a direct result of NCC communication practices.

The above examples provide context within which to interpret the North City Chamber colorblind communication practices *and* Texan identity communication practices indexes of White identity in this community. First, unlike most businesses in Big City, the North City Chamber does not talk about diversity or place value on diversity. They also do not have a committee focused on diversity and inclusion or reach out to people of color to be a part of their chamber. For example, when trying to diversify their organization, the NCC formed a "Young Professionals Committee", which does not explicitly place value on racial and ethnic diversity. When discussing diversity, Elizabeth, the NCC chair of the board claims that there are people in Texas who "bring something different to the table", but the NCC does not actually reach out to and court diverse people to be on their board. This choice to not explicitly engage with diversity contributes to NCC's positioning as a White chamber of commerce primarily because most other businesses in Big City do explicitly talk about and value racial and ethnic diversity.

Second, Alf positions diversity as part of a Big City business identity (e.g., "In Big City, it's very strong", "Big City embraces", "in the east coast I don't know"). Big City is a racially diverse city. Only 50% of the population identifies as White, and much of the White population also identifies as having a Hispanic ethnicity. Therefore, White people are not in the majority in this community and many White organizations adopt diversity and inclusion programs to seem inclusive of this racially diverse community. The NCC, in not doing so, is in a sense, being 'less Texan'. This is especially interesting because the NCC considers itself to be very Texan and often explicitly discusses their Texan identity. Thus, the way that NCC members engage with being Texan (through barbecuing, talking about sports) is a White, privileged way of being a Texan,

one that does not include the other, very important Big City, Texan characteristic: supporting diversity.

D. Conclusions

This chapter has illustrated how seemingly non-raced communication practices by NCC members actually construct and maintain Whiteness as a hegemonic professional identity category for the chamber. This happens, for the most part, because chamber member practices adhere to one particular norm for interaction: one can only discuss experiences of groups with whom you share an identity. George, for example, can only mention the "White" racial category because he is "in that category" but addresses diversity in business by using vague terms such as "who's the face". Elizabeth freely talks about the Deep South (and even negatively characterizes its lack of diversity) because she is from there but when talking about diversity in Texas uses colorblind metaphors ("interesting fabric of folks"). In both of these cases, chamber members erase race and delay mentioning race (Bucholtz, 2011), both strategies which mark talking about racial difference as out of the ordinary for members of this chamber. Chamber member explicit enactment of a Texan, masculine identity is also a product of this norm. Many chamber members are White male Texans and therefore freely discuss Texas sports and barbecuing in the workplace. Furthermore, a non-Texan uses a masculine identity (fatherhood) to connect with an audience of fathers. Connor uses this masculine identity to bridge regional differences between his own identity as a "Yankee" from Massachusetts and the "Texan" identity of his audience, thus illustrating the importance of both Texan and masculine identities in this chamber.

This norm for interaction can be explained by the individual code of respect that appears in many forms of American talk (Carbaugh, 1988):

> a speaker does not have a right to any opinion which extends beyond the individual, that is stated for another or is, in a sense, of social concern. Opinions stated as such are heard to violate the rights of others by "imposing" on them (p. 30).

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Thus, for members of the NCC, following the norm to only talk about experiences of your own group might stem from the good intentions of chamber members to not talk about experiences with which they are unfamiliar, to (accidentally) negatively or incorrectly characterize minority groups, or to impose their opinions on a group of which they are not a part. Following this norm, however, also functions to perpetuate an organizational culture where White experiences are the only experiences that are discussed. Someone whose experiences differ from those in this chamber may feel hindered from communicating with and becoming a part of this group (e.g., like the Asian board member who did not network at the Aviation event because this was a "different crowd"). Following this norm, therefore, tends to construct White identity as the invisible, normative identity in this chamber and to implicitly exclude minority members from participation in this organization.

These practices not only position the North City Chamber as White in the sense of their personal experiences, but also position the chamber as White politically. Past research about colorblind discourses claims that colorblind discourses ignore racial inequality and systemic disadvantages faced by minority groups by reproducing colorblind ideologies. Colorblind ideology is reproduced by discourses that posit that racial inequality does not exist and America is a meritocracy where people rise in social hierarchies based on individual qualifications (Bonilla Silva, 2006; Bucholtz, 2011; Gallagher, 2003; Lewis, 2004). Scholars have illustrated, however, that America is not in fact a meritocracy, and that there are still systemic disadvantages faced by racial minority groups in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Bucholtz, 2011; Hill, 2008; Vargas, 2014).

Thus, minority members of the business community lead a professional life that is very much shaped by racial identity and inequality and therefore constantly talk about racial identity categories and are aware that most organizations in Big City explicitly voice their support for diversity. This is why some members of the minority community characterize the NCC as having a stigma because their communication practices do *not* include reaching out to minority groups.

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This is especially a problem because the NCC is a member based organization and supports its members by working with local politicians to get pro-business policies passed. The NCC does not reach out to minority businesses to be members nor do they advocate for minority participation in the workplace when they meet with politicians. Instead, the NCC communication practices foreground a privileged Texan identity, one which ignores racial inequality in the Big City community and deviates from norms for supporting diversity that the rest of the community follows.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS: COMMUNICATION AND RACE

A main contribution of this dissertation lies in how everyday communication practices reproduce boundaries among White and non-White business communities, and more generally White and non-White racial groups. These communication practices reproduce essentialist ideologies of race. Essentialist ideologies position each racial group as having a race and being connected to one another through a shared racial identity category and position the White racial group as invisible, normative, and often *non*-raced. Essentialist ideology, therefore, upholds current racial hierarchies that position Whiteness as the dominant, invisible racial group and racial minority groups as the 'other', marked racial groups, and these communication practices contribute to upholding status quo social structures (Giddens, 1984). Below, I address each research question: I describe two forms of race talk, how these forms of talk reproduce ideologies about race, and position the findings of this research in relation to broader studies of communication and racial identity formation.

A. How do members' communication practices interactionally accomplish race as relevant to organizational contexts?

Analysis of members' communication practices highlights two forms of race talk that are prevalent in this business community. One form of race talk can be broadly characterized as explicitly addressing race as relevant to organizational contexts. This form of race talk is practiced mostly by members of the AACC and organizations who work with the Asian Chamber and other minority identified organizations. A second form of race talk can be broadly characterized implicitly enacting Whiteness as a normative professional identity. This form of race talk is practiced mostly by members of the NCC. Below is a table that summarizes the features of each form of race talk:

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Table 6.1: Two forms of Race Talk

Explicit Discussion of Race	Implicit Enactment of Whiteness
Race and ethnicity as professional identities	Colorblind discourses - Metaphors for racial diversity - Euphemisms for ethnicity and race - Marking the mention of race and ethnicity as 'non-normative'
Maintaining the AACC - Joking about diversity - Code-switching - Ethnic Switching	Texan, masculine discourses - Barbecue competition talk - Sports talk - Mention of fatherhood - Mention of regional difference
Maintaining business networks - Ethnic Switching	
Culture of Diversity	The Individual Code

Characteristics of the explicit discussion of race are grouped by function. Members and non-members of the AAC often consciously and strategically construct race for purposes of performing a variety of business-related functions. First, chapter 2 illustrates how race and ethnicity are constructed *as* professional identities. Race is not talked about as a separate 'culture' but rather as constituting someone's identity as a professional person (e.g. Jasmine Jackson won a contract because she is Black, Asian, and a woman). Chapter 3 illustrates some of the ways that AACC members invoke racial, ethnic, and national difference through forms of joking, and these forms of joking help AACC members maintain their organization by positioning differences as harmless things that can be joked about rather than divisive differences that threaten solidarity in their organization. Chapters 3 and 4 illustrate how both members and non-members of the AACC engage in ethnic switching (Espiritu, 1992), or switching among using different racial and ethnic categories to meet organizational goals. While AACC members' use of ethnic switching generally helps to meet AACC goals, the ethnic switching done by outsiders does serve to marginalize the NCC as a marked, other minority organization. These communication practices can be explained by the AACC's culture of diversity. Members in this organization (and people

who address this organization) are expected to talk about how different social identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, nationality, linguistic) might be relevant to business practices. Thus, when outsiders address this group, they connect with this group by also addressing racial and ethnic identities of group members.

Characteristics of the implicit enactment of Whiteness are grouped by discourses that function to construct Whiteness as an invisible, normative identity. Members of this organization engage in colorblind discourses, using multiple communicative resources to *avoid* the explicit discussion of race. Furthermore, members of this organization, instead of foregrounding race, foreground a Texan, masculine identity through most of their communication practices. These identities (Texan, masculine) are positioned as invisible, normative identities, identities that are neutral, and therefore inclusive of 'everyone'. This is one reason that race and ethnicity might not be discussed, because many members of the NCC do not "have" a race, and not everyone shares the same race. Therefore, discussing race is positioned as being less inclusive. NCC communication practices can also be explained by the individual code of respect (Carbaugh, 1988) prevalent in American society. NCC members speak as individuals and address their own individual experiences. Since NCC members happen to be all White Texans, all the experiences discussed tend to be similar to one another. The communication then becomes an index of White identity and reproduces White identity as being a normative identity for the chamber. Talking about differences with others based on non-shared social identities is not usually permissible in this chamber of commerce. Therefore, chamber members do *not* discuss race and ethnicity.

B. How might members' race talk reproduce, negotiate, or challenge ideologies that maintain the dominant position of Whiteness in United States racial hierarchies?

These communication practices, in addition to being explained by differing cultures in the AACC and NCC can also be explained by situating these practices in relation to ideologies about race. Taken together, practices of the NCC, in constructing Whiteness as invisible, and practices of the AACC, in explicitly marking minority identities, reproduce and maintain

ideologies that position Whiteness as dominant, unmarked, hegemonic identity in United States racial hierarchies (Trechter & Bucholtz, 2001; Woolard, 1985). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the reason that these communication practices reproduce racial hierarchies is because they occur "in social fields of unequal power relations" (Alim & Reyes, 2011, p. 382).

For example, both organizations incorporate social identities as professional identities. The AACC incorporates race and the NCC incorporates a Texan identity. The "Asian" and "racial minority" identity categories adopted by the AACC, however, are not shared by members who prefer to identify based on national differences. The Asian identity is not a natural similarity for group members and is adopted because it is somewhat imposed by outsiders (e.g., Texas politicians, US affirmative action policies that encourage minority groups to adopt US federally defined racial categories). AACC members, therefore, consciously do substantial amounts of interactional work to construct Asian, various ethnicities, and various professional identities as all being intertwined. Despite all of these efforts, AACC members are excluded from the mainstream business community based on the racial identity category that outsiders chose for this group. Thus, even though working within systems of US racial hierarchies does provide Asians some advantages, Asians ultimately do not benefit from marking themselves as the other.

Members of the NCC on the other hand invoke a Texan, masculine identity that is shared by most members and positioned as a natural form of connection. This is why these identities are oriented to as invisible by chamber members, and there is little interactional work done to strategically connect 'being Texan' as a relevant to 'doing business'. This is partly because Texan, masculine identities are positioned as taken for granted, invisible professional identities. For example, outside corporations do not orient to this chamber as a bunch of Texans who run a Texan cultural organization. Therefore, members of the NCC can more freely, and authentically, incorporate aspects of their social lives into doing business without fear of negative consequences. By positioning chamber communication practices in relation to larger ideologies,

this dissertation is able to explain how everyday, taken for granted practices provide insight into how power relations among racial groups are constructed and maintained.

C. What theoretical contributions do these findings make to the study of communication, race, and identity?

These forms of race talk also provide insight into how everyday communication practices are implicated in processes of racial formation. Similar to previous waves of White European immigrant groups, Asians are seen as similar (e.g., in the same way that southern and eastern Europeans were seen as similar) but *also* as constituted by different groups (e.g., in the same way that there was awareness of differences between Irish, Italian, Polish, and Jewish immigrant groups). However, unlike White immigrant groups, many Asian groups who have lived in the United States since the mid-1800s (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese) are still positioned as a racial minority group (on the Census and in everyday life) and have not 'become White' despite high socioeconomic achievements. In Texas, Asians are a relatively new immigrant group. Therefore, analyzing their communication practices provides insight into how this foreign identity is constructed and why this identity might persist across generations.

Table 6.2: Communication and Racial Identity Formation

Racial Identity Formation	Asian Identity Formation
Immigrants given/adopt a racial category and both immigrants and outsiders define category	East Asian and South Asian immigrants given/adopt "Asian" category. "Asian" defined by both Asians and non-Asians as a single, foreign, diverse group
Second generation upholds aspects of racial or ethnic identity for purposes of solidarity	Second generation Asian American youth uphold aspects of racial and ethnic identity
Outsiders attribute this identity to phenotype	Outsiders understand this identity as part of "Asian" or "South Asian" or "Indian" cultures
Certain qualities become 'natural' defining qualities of group	Foreign-ness becomes a natural defining quality of 'Asian'
Definitions are constructed in relation to an invisible 'White' identity	Asians are constructed as foreign in relation to an authentic, American White identity

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In this dissertation, AACC members invoke ties to multiple different nations and construct themselves as an 'international' chamber, thus helping them meet their institutional goals. The NCC members, on the other hand, invoke a local, Texan culture as constituting their White identity. These communication practices reproduce ideologies that position Asians as foreign (Lo & Reyes, 2009) – as having a distinct culture stemming from various foreign countries – and White Americans as having an authentic, local, invisible culture (Fought, 2006). Thus, both Asians and White Americans ascribe a foreign, cultural identity to Asians. Since racial identity is popularly thought of in terms of phenotypic difference, children of Asian immigrants are also subject to being thought of as 'foreign' in some sense, and second generation groups often maintain culture for purposes of pride and solidarity (e.g., Chun, 2001; Lo, 1999; Reyes, 2004, 2012; Reyes & Lo, 2009; Shankar, 2008, Shrikant, 2015). Whiteness is often used by both minority and non-minority groups as an "ideological pivot" (Trechter & Bucholtz, 2001, p. 4) against which minority identities are constructed and maintained. In the case of Asian American identity, communication practices construct a foreign culture as a natural defining quality of Asian Americans and authentic locality as a natural defining quality of White Americans.

Of course, racial identity formation shapes and is shaped by sociohistorical processes (Omi & Winant, 1994). Therefore, it is important to continue studying how racial and ethnic identities are formed and might shift over time. In addition, communication practices themselves shape and are shaped by various aspects of context. This dissertation examines how communication in a *business community* among *Asian immigrants* and *White Texans* contribute to processes of racial formation. These specific findings are useful for organizational scholars or professionals interested in studying racial and ethnic diversity as it pertains to organizational contexts, for sociologists interested in questions of racial formation, and for communication scholars who focus on the role of communication in racial formation processes. Future studies should continue studying relationship between communication and race to provide a more complete understanding about the ways that communication practices about race and ethnicity

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shape and are shaped by the various contexts in which they occur and how communication

practices might contribute to the empowerment or marginalization of racial groups. By focusing

on everyday communication practices in particular, studies can shed light on how the taken for

granted, matter of fact ways we conduct ourselves play a significant role in sustaining or

negotiating the racial organization of social life.

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