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Keywords

transformational change, leadership, emotions, identity, psychological sense of community

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Abstract

Leading through identity change is a highly emotive experience. When leadership is understood as an emotional community development process, the benefits for repurposing identity are greatly enhanced. This article introduces a change model that embeds emotional awareness throughout a four-phased process, adapting concepts originally presented in McMillan and Chavis's (1986) psychological sense of community (PSOC) theory and Scott and Jaffee's (1989) change curve model. In this case study, we focus on a four-year multi-campus northeastern United States public university as a model to investigate how individuals in leadership positions consider the role of affect in creating positive identity change to the university's psychological sense of community.

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University identities often have rich histories, passed from decade to decade through shared narratives. These narratives tie the past with the present with respect to values, beliefs, and practices. Despite having a strong sense of identity, in the current economic climate many state universities face unprecedented changes: state financial support is declining, private competition is increasing, and student demographics are shifting. This transforming landscape has placed pressure on state-run universities to restructure, repurpose, and reshape their previous identities. The process of identity reformation is further compounded when multi-campus sites, each with unique characteristics, are nested within a larger public university system. A multi-campus system often implies more convoluted layers of governance, with separate campuses exhibiting distinctive traits, strengths, challenges, and even disparate student populations.

Universities that expect to meet the needs of their various constituents often are, if not always, in a state of flux. This continuous change elicits a range of emotions in faculty and administration. As such, university leaders need to be sensitive not only to changes in organizational identity, but to the associated emotional well-being of those who support the institutional mission. We argue that identity change is an inherently emotional community process requiring leaders to react with a sensitivity to

the "psychological sense of community" (PSOC) at the individual, group, campus, and university community levels.

The PSOC concept was first identified by Sarason (1974) and later expanded upon by McMillan and Chavis (1986) and is defined as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan, 1986, p. 9). Deconstructing this definition, one can clearly see the importance of "feeling" experiences in the concept of "community."

When a community is undergoing identity repurposing, emotions of its members often run high. In fact, several authors have compared organizational change to the phases of grief and loss identified by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969), whereby individuals progress through emotional transition phases of denial, fear, anger, frustration, uncertainty, bargaining, acceptance, renewal, and commitment (Bridges, 2003; Fisher, 2005; Zell, 2003). John M. Fisher's (2005) popular change management model expanded upon Kubler-Ross's phases of death and dying to include eight phases: anxiety and denial, happiness, fear, threat, guilt and disillusionment, depression and hostility, gradual acceptance, and moving forward. Alternatively, the Scott and Jaffee (1989) organizational model of change

includes four phases: denial, resistance, exploration, and commitment. The model suggested that individuals must eventually reach the final stage of commitment in order to perform effectively within a changed organization. The authors of the models agreed that change and organizational change is highly emotional, but that the process is rarely a linear one.

There is increasing evidence across disciplines that change commonly occurs in discontinuous and nonlinear ways (Hayes, Laurenceau, Feldman, Strauss, & Cardaciotto, 2007). Often, individuals return to a previous stage or get stuck at a particular stage. The Jaffee and Scott model (2003) incorporates what they call the “Tarzan Swing,” where leaders often expect others to move quickly through the change process and may even become frustrated with those who do not easily accept change at the same tempo as the leadership. Leaders may have the unintended expectation that change is to be accepted while, in fact, some individuals may appear accepting but still harbor feelings of anger, which in turn may result in a decline in productivity (Jaffee & Scott, 2003). This back-and-forth swinging movement is a metaphor that aptly illustrates emotions as dynamic and fluid. Research has revealed that emotions are powerful and predictable drivers of decision making (Keltner & Lerner, 2010; Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, & Kassam, 2015). It is therefore imperative that leaders give attention to the connections between emotions and decisions during times of change.

We argue that a leader’s awareness of and sensitivity to the psychological sense of community are vital to the successful repurposing of workplace identity. Specifically in higher education, university personnel at all levels who understand how emotions impact the psychological sense of community are better positioned to shape a positive community identity. In this article, we examine leadership practices during identity reformation and their effects on the psychological sense of community lens by utilizing a case study. Although a wealth of literature exists discussing organizational higher education identity and change, *how* multi-campus sites undergo the process of identity reformation and the role of emotional sensitivity on the psychological sense of community is under-researched, poorly understood, and the focus of this case study.

Our review of relevant literature found an overwhelming majority of authors view emotions as a cause of interference with change rather than essential to it. Few position the emotional dimension as primary in navigating identity reformation or repurposing a sense of community. We assert that emotions are both central and essential to identity change and, as such, have great importance to the

PSOC. We believe emotions are the litmus test of whether organizations/institutions move forward or backward and therefore are core to any leadership change model. When leadership is understood as an emotional community development process, the benefits for repurposing identity and potential are greatly enhanced. Therefore, we believe a new framework is needed that allows for understanding the primary role of emotions during identity repurposing and as a foundation to the psychological sense of community. In response, the ELIMAR change model was developed as a combination of models to showcase the role of emotions in advancing the psychological sense of community in higher education during identity change processes. The ELIMAR model embeds emotional awareness throughout a four-phase model, adapting concepts originally presented in the McMillan and Chavis (1986) psychological sense of community (PSOC) theory and the Scott and Jaffee (1989) change curve model. This new model expands the PSOC framework (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) into another context, thereby contributing to the literature.

The ELIMAR model is a community change model that underscores the central role of emotions that impact the “sense of community.” The model demonstrates that, while change occurs in stages, the process often is non-linear with individuals progressing at their own rate. This model helps leaders become more aware and sensitive to the affective experience of facilitating change processes.

We begin with a review of the psychological sense of community theory, emotional intelligence of leaders during organizational change, and the concept of emotional contagion. We then introduce the emergent ELIMAR model by applying it to a multi-campus university case study. Next, we examine leadership implications to aid future higher education leaders faced with campus identity repurposing.

Literature Review

Psychological Sense of Community Model

Psychological sense of community is a concept in community and social psychology first introduced in 1974 by Seymour Sarason. McMillan and Chavis (1986) further expanded upon Sarason’s theory by developing a model that included four components of a psychological sense of community: membership, mutual influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connections. The first component of *membership* is described as feelings of emotional safety with a sense of belonging, association, and identification that includes the

expectation of acceptance by the community and involves a personal investment of both physical and cognitive energy. Membership often strengthens over time, consequently the longer an individual is associated as a group member, the more s/he identifies with the group and feels a sense of belonging.

The second component in the model is *mutual influence*. This component is described as having opportunities to contribute and to exert influence on the community with reciprocal influence of the community back on the individual. This mutuality includes a sense of mattering and of making a difference to the group while the group also matters to its members.

According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), *mutual influence* is facilitated by feeling a sense of trust within the community that is built over time and reliably counted upon. During periods of higher education institutional change, faculty may experience a declining shift in trust due to differing priorities set by the administrative leadership and due to communication failures and barriers.

The third component in the model is *integration and fulfillment of needs*. Workplace communities have the capacity to fulfill physical, spiritual, cultural, and emotional needs. The integration of needs across these domains presents a holistic picture exemplifying the crossover between personal and professional identity. This is quite evident in the culture of higher education, where faculty identity often is a deeply satisfying identity shaped by years of study and networking. Deep emotional attachment to a field of study is not unusual and creates a strong foothold in one's professional identity, which in turn impacts and shapes an individual's psychological sense of community.

The fourth component of the McMillan and Chavis (1986) model is *shared emotional connection* and is considered the core element of the psychological sense of community. *Shared emotional connections* provide for the basis of close relationships. The identity of "professor" or a specific allegiance to the university is a shared emotional experience. Faculty can foster a sense of belonging, an opportunity to seek others with common interests and passions, and often finding colleagues to share this connection provides deep satisfaction, purpose, and meaning in the chosen profession.

Emotional Intelligence

Since the only permanence in the life of an organization, community, or society is change, it is incumbent upon those attempting to lead a change to be vigilant of change itself. To this end, leaders who are aware of the

pivotal role of emotions during change realize that both small and large changes affect us in significant ways and manifold emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Emotional intelligence is an attribute that appears to be of particular importance for effective change leadership (Boyatzis, Goleman, & McKee, 2002; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). A leader's emotional intelligence (EI) in understanding others' feelings with empathy is of crucial importance when leading employees through a change process. Emotional intelligence is defined as the capacity of an individual to perceive, appraise, express, and manage emotion and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Later empirical research of EI and transformational leadership by Masi and Cooke (2000) confirmed a leader's EI is associated with organizational satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness. Constructs of EI such as self-awareness, empathy, and motivation also have direct positive correlations with transformational leadership traits such as individual influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Kumar, 2014). Vakola, Tsaousis, and Nikolaou (2004) claimed employees with low control of emotions react negatively toward proposed changes since they are not well equipped to respond constructively to the demands and the affective consequences of change. Particularly for those employees who possess neither high emotional awareness nor the ability to express their emotions either openly or constructively, their leaders may need to model compassionate leadership and facilitate employee adaptation through the change process.

Effective leaders not only articulate a compelling vision and inspire others toward change, but they also possess a high degree of emotional intelligence to do so. Such organizational or community leadership is today referred to in the literature as transformational leadership (Bass, 1990, 1997; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978); resonant leadership (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005); visionary leadership (Kotter, 1996; Strange & Mumford, 2005); and charismatic leadership (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998; House, 1977; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Transformational and visionary leaders appeal to followers' values and emotions (Sashkin & Fulmer, 1988; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). Later empirical studies confirmed the correlation between transformational leadership and EI (Gardner & Stough, 2002; Masi & Cooke, 2000; Nicholls, 1994; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002). Such leaders utilize EI, not only for empathizing with others as a means of connection and influence, but also as a source of information to navigate and to lead others effectively through the individual and collective emotional rigors of the phases of change.

Emotional Contagion

Schoenewolf (1990) developed the concept of *emotional contagion*, where a person or group influences similar emotions and behaviors in another person or group. This phenomenon was later expanded by Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Repon (1993) to include where individuals synchronize their personal emotions with the emotions expressed by those around them, whether consciously or unconsciously, and thus an emotion conveyed by one person will become "contagious" to others. This mimicry and synchronization produce emotional movement between people and are shared by individuals through expressions, postures, vocalizations, and movements both implicitly and explicitly. At the community level, emotional contagion fosters emotional synchrony between individuals that can involve both positive and negative oriented emotions. Therefore, it seems reasonable to extrapolate the phenomenon of emotional contagion influencing individuals and groups also has an impact on the psychological sense of community in a university setting.

The ELIMAR Model

When viewed through a psychological sense of community lens, we place emotions in all phases of a change process, acknowledging emotion as both the tension and motivation that pull and push identity formation and a sense of community. In the ELIMAR model, both positive and negative emotions impact the way we think, feel, and behave. We suggest that community members move through four phases in response to changes that eventually lead to community identity repurposing.

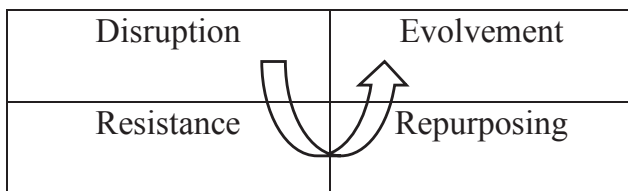


Figure 1. The ELIMAR model

The ELIMAR model uses a curve graphic to illustrate those engaged in repurposing community identity progress non-linearly through different phases. Different individuals may move along the process, then return to a previous phase, followed by forward movement once again. The four-phase model provides a framework to guide leaders and can be adapted to meet the needs of individual, department, college, and university level understanding.

Figure 2 takes the ELIMAR model and nests it within the psychological sense of community components.

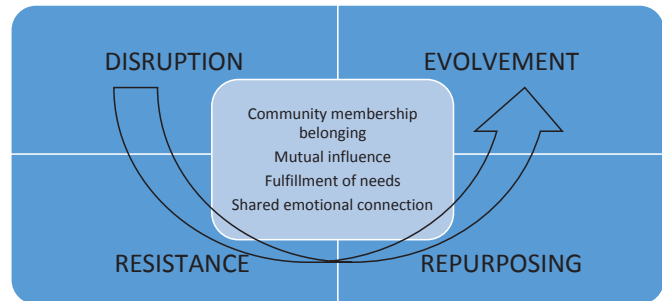


Figure 2. The ELIMAR model placed within Sarason (1974) and the McMillian and Chavis (1986) expansion of the psychological sense of community model.

The ELIMAR Model Phases

In this model, the first phase is Community Membership Disruption, where community members are introduced to future impending changes. In this phase individuals are happy or comfortable with the status quo and may reject the reality of the impending change. Additional emotions experienced by disparate stakeholders may include doubt, apathy, annoyance, relief, excitement, anger, fear, and shock. This disruptive phase shakes the psychological sense of community, as once the reality of impending change is recognized, some individuals stay in this phase while others may move into the resistance phase. How leaders lead during this first phase is critical. Effective leaders during the disruption phase realize emotions are different for every individual involved. Leaders also should anticipate the possibility of some level of emotional contagion occurring as stakeholders grapple to regain a sense of community.

An articulated common vision along with individual and group discussions will help community members focus positively on the impending change(s). Giving members time to adjust to the news is important, and scheduling follow-up planning sessions is equally important. Leaders may need to be especially sensitive to sharing information of what is known and unknown. Open and frequent communication provides a venue for employees to voice their concerns and test the reality of the impending change(s), especially for those denying that anything of significance will change. Additionally, such processes facilitated by leadership help members to test for rumor truthfulness, encourage a sense of commonality in the effort—we are all in this together phenomena, and provide a place to voice valid concerns and to ask pertinent questions about the benefits of the change(s). Such opportunities

from leadership set a foundation from which movement through other stages can occur.

The next phase of the model is the Resistance Phase. During this phase individuals may experience either an aversion to the change itself or concerns about how the change process is going to occur. Individuals may spend more energy on attempting to maintain the status quo or discussing what is being given up than on seeking potential or positive gains from the change. Emotions run deep during the resistance phase and often present as anger, anxiety, fear, frustration, confusion, disillusion, or bitterness. A lack of trust may be prevalent and contagious. The emotional contagion discussed earlier can easily hinder or facilitate the psychological sense of community.

The resistance phase often is difficult for both leaders and employees. Change is difficult for many reasons and requires a farewell to the status quo—the familiar that will soon be history. A genuine increase in workplace involvement and participation in the change process can offset feelings of powerlessness and can lead to a renewed sense of ownership and commitment. Leadership can share information about those parts of the change process over which no one has control, such as lower demographics of college bound citizens, legislative cuts to education, or low program enrollments. Nonetheless, many aspects of any change effort are negotiable, and individual members of the community can influence them by identifying “stressors” and talking through their concerns. It is important for leaders to explain the plan skillfully and as fully as is possible, making the information readily available. During this early phase of a change process, it is equally important for leaders to take time to talk with and listen to community members. Asking members for feedback helps to keep a pulse on the emotional well-being of stakeholders, including staff, faculty, students, the public, the board of trustees, and the administration.

Often a change is seen as beneficial for the organization, but not for the employees. It is important for leaders to specify not just how the changes will benefit the organization, but also how stakeholders will benefit. Those sitting on the fence, will look for signs that the change is not only necessary, but positive and worth their personal effort.

In the third phase, named the Repurposing Phase, individuals explore the implications of the change for them personally and for the organization collectively. This phase often is an emotional time distinguished by simultaneous feelings of uncertainty and exhilaration that wax and wane into attempts to define a new sense of identity and community. A range of emotions including relief, skepticism, hope, anticipation, impatience, and anxiety may be present.

During the repurposing phase leaders need to clarify and focus on priorities. New skills may be needed to adjust to the changes required by new technology, e.g., new teaching modalities or new administrative processes and procedures. Organizational leaders will want to ignite brainstorming, visioning, and planning sessions throughout the organization. A needs assessment during this time will allow community members to focus on short and long-term strategic planning. This focused action will help employees know that investments are being made that will make the changes successful.

Finally, the individuals involved in the change process enter the fourth phase of Evolvement that includes some level of commitment. People start to turn their attention and emotional energy outward as they commit to the new organizational future and begin carving out how they can personally fit into this new sense of community. During the evolvement phase leaders now can concentrate on building their leadership teams, looking ahead, jointly set long-term goals with their team, and encourage other organizational team leaders to do the same. Leaders will gain trust and momentum by validating and rewarding innovation toward achieving the mission.

In review, the duality of both positive and negative emotional expression is evident at each phase. For example, while community membership disruption may be viewed as negative, we challenge this type of disruption also can be a positive force. The disruption in one part of a university may be anticipated and welcomed, producing emotions of excitement and relief, and yet for others who are happy with the status quo, may view a disruption with fear and anxiety. This range of both positive and negative emotional responses is true for each of the four phases: disruption, resistance, repurposing, and evolvement. Therefore, it is imperative leaders identify what is valued, unique, and important to the community and what would be advantageous to keep in the repurposing of identity effort. Likewise, awareness of what is unknown often is what creates the apprehension, confusion, and anxiety-laden emotions. As community members often share the lived experience together, the emotional contagion, whether positive or negative, can spread quickly and become pervasive.

To further illustrate the interaction of the PSOC components and the ELIMAR phases, Table 1 offers a comparative table of potential questions, comments and associated emotions across each component of the psychological sense of community conceptual framework, followed by a case study example applying the ELIMAR model in a University setting.

Table 1.

Comparative Table of Psychological Sense of Community Components with the ELIMAR Model and Associated Emotions, Questions, and Comments.

Components	ELIMAR phase	Questions and emotions
Disruption	Membership belonging	Who changed the definition of tenure? Will I have my job if we change our purpose?
	Mutual influence	Am I going to have a say in how the change occurs? How much influence will I have if we head in this direction? Who can I trust-administration, my faculty and colleagues?
	Fulfillment of needs	What is in this for me? How will I benefit? Will my personal and professional needs be fulfilled? Will my scholarship only be about community engagement now, or can I continue with the research I have been doing for the past 10 years on X?
	Shared emotional connection	What does this mean for me and my faculty colleagues? Our students? Our community members? How are we feeling about this potential change? <i>Confusion, distracted, pensiveness:</i> "We don't even know what X means!" <i>Doubt, distrust, annoyance, apathy:</i> "Here we go again. This too will pass." <i>Anger:</i> "We have a full plate now and we are being asked to do things differently!" <i>Fear, apprehension, and threat:</i> "Are we going to lose our jobs too?" <i>Shock, numbing:</i> "Unbelievable, why can't we just keep doing what we have always done well?" <i>Excitement:</i> "Wow, we were hoping we would move in this direction!" <i>Relief:</i> "Finally, they are going to deal with this issue!"
Resistance	Membership belonging	Is this now the faculty with whom I want to associate? Is this the college or university with which I want to continue my professional association?
	Mutual influence	Why are they doing it to us in this way? What happened to shared governance? Has anyone thought about X? What happens if X?
	Fulfillment of needs	Who can I count on and why should I? Who has my best interests in mind? I'm just going to keep my nose to the grind stone and stay low. What's the plan? The schedules, etc.?
	Shared emotional connection	I don't like where and how we are headed. I need more. How are we feeling about this change? Have you heard the latest? Why are we being treated unfairly? <i>Anxiety, disapproval:</i> "Nothing feels right to any of us."

	Shared emotional connection (continued)	<p><i>Anger, rage, aggressiveness, bitterness, loathing:</i> “We’re going to the protest, are you coming?”</p> <p><i>Frustration:</i> “We are so frustrated with this soul crushing process!”</p> <p><i>Confusion, overwhelmed, surprise:</i> “These numbers aren’t accurate. Where did they come from?”</p> <p><i>Fear:</i> “We’re afraid our college is in jeopardy.”</p> <p><i>Threat:</i> “Who is going to lose their job next?”</p> <p><i>Disillusionment:</i> “We are feeling very pessimistic about the outcome.”</p> <p><i>Powerful:</i> “I will stand my ground.”</p>
Repurposing	<p>Membership belonging</p> <p>Mutual influence</p> <p>Fulfillment of needs</p> <p>Shared emotional connection</p>	<p>Who do we want to be, now? How does this change our mission? What strengths do we have to contribute?</p> <p>How can we collaborate on solving this issue? How can we together meet the challenge that faces us together?</p> <p>How do we go forward with the resources that we now have? What else do we need to fulfill our responsibilities to our students?</p> <p>How are we healing? <i>Enthusiasm, vigilance:</i> “We are ready to move forward!” <i>Uncertainty, ambivalence, curiosity:</i> “I’ll watch and see what happens.” <i>Relief:</i> “We have an opportunity now to be something different and better.” <i>Skepticism:</i> “This process of redefining ourselves is a diversion from downsizing.” <i>Hope, optimism, interest:</i> “Things will be better eventually.” <i>Anticipation:</i> “I’m excited about what is next!” <i>Impatience:</i> “This red tape is driving me nuts!” <i>Sadness, grief:</i> “We’ve lost so many good people with all these changes!” <i>Anxiety:</i> “We are healing, but will the waves of cuts keep coming?”</p>
Evolution	<p>Membership belonging</p> <p>Mutual influence</p> <p>Fulfillment of needs</p> <p>Shared emotional connection</p>	<p>What do we need to work on together? How do we grow and develop? Who else do we need to join us?</p> <p>How do we need to be together in order to support one another? What does true collaboration look like as we work together?</p> <p>What roles and responsibilities do we need to take on to accomplish our vision/mission/goals? How are individual and community needs being fulfilled?</p> <p>How is the community generally feeling? What have we learned to take into the future? <i>Eager:</i> “Let’s look ahead.” <i>Energized, acceptance:</i> “Let’s get started.” <i>Hope, Resilience:</i> “We can do this!” <i>Confident:</i> “I know we will succeed.” <i>Relief:</i> “I feel more settled.” <i>Anticipation, happy, excitement:</i> “I’m excited to work with you!”</p>

ELIMAR Model Application

This case involves a major northeastern multi-campus University that for over a decade underwent significant university-wide changes in response to global, economic, technological, and cultural changes. For the purposes of our discussion, we use Nicholson's (2004) definition of a multi-campus university as distinct campuses significantly separated by geography combined into a single system.

The University's three campuses each have distinct characteristics and are geographically located between 15 and 40 miles of each other. Two of the three campuses are located in the two largest cities of the state. Over the past four decades, the complex evolution of financial and budgetary challenges for the University resulted in a financial crisis. This crisis was occurring at the same time that the national recession and decrease in state funding was happening, which resulted in a quadruple influenced budget crisis. When it was publicly announced that major changes were necessary for the survival of the University, a cascade of budgetary cuts began. As the administration announced faculty retrenchments, staff positions, and specific academic program eliminations, many faculty members were triggered to transition from the denial phase to the resistance phase. Others jumped to exploration, moving rapidly to the repurposing phase as they sought valid financial information and organized to find alternative actions other than those presented by the administration.

Although resistance often is thought of and displayed negatively, it also can be a positive reaction to proposed or implemented changes. This was evident in self-organized faculty committees and task forces, student protests, and informal meeting groups. Resistance to the implemented changes also was a response to the larger social justice issue of public education in the United States as a democratic right for all state residents. For many, resistance to the proposed changes served to catalyze a response that built the faculty's positive sense of community by rallying around a common purpose—the survival of their common community identity. Despite awareness of a shaken sense of community, the administrative leadership continued forward with the proposed changes that included elimination of programs and related faculty and staff. One of the recommendations during this tumultuous time was to re-claim the identity as a Metropolitan University. The identity of a metropolitan university is a respected distinction for public urban institutions that often centers on both research and teaching, largely through a focus on their metropolitan region and community engagement. The University had previously utilized that identity at one time

but did not actively market itself as such. Because of the University campuses being in populous urban settings, re-identifying as a metropolitan university made logical sense to some stakeholder groups. A University steering group was formed to examine the metropolitan university identity, to research similar universities that had experienced a need to recreate their identity, and to bring forth recommendations. The Metropolitan University Steering Group (2014) stated in their final report that forging a new identity was not simply a choice, it was an essential necessity and in fact necessary for survival.

This phenomenon of identity survival appears common for other metropolitan universities, as noted by Barbara Holland (2014), an expert scholar in community engagement and metropolitan universities. Holland stated many regional/metropolitan universities share similar identity challenges, as they are a hybrid of both core academic roles, research, and teaching while simultaneously dominated and largely focused on community engagement. Although the merits of the metropolitan university identity were clear to many stakeholders, others felt this framing was a convenient diversion from the “decimation” occurring at the University. Some members of the community exhibited strong resistance to the metropolitan university identity through questioning and public discourse. Various members were divided in their emotional responses, many exhibiting confusion, resentment, or tentative excitement of the unknown. Such responses indicate the variability in individual emotional responses to change and subsequent identity challenges that the change pushes forward.

Concurrently during the greatest months of upheaval, the University was conducting a national search for a new president. This president would not only need to navigate through the current change process, but also guide the future direction of the University. The selection committee crafted a number of key transformational leadership competencies the new president would embody in order to build community, expand the public service mission, and hold a commitment to civic and community engagement. This president would need cultural competence, an ability to set priorities, effective communication skills to deliver difficult news when necessary, and visionary and ethical leadership. Specifically, at this juncture in repurposing the University identity, the search committee was looking for a leader with strong culture-building skills to sustain and rehabilitate relationships among faculty, staff, departments, campuses, and administration. This ability required expertise in managing conflict with focus and compassion. In essence, these culture and community-building skills translate into what leadership and organizational behavior

literature identifies as emotional intelligence, which further influences and shapes the psychological sense of community (Gardner & Stough, 2002; Masi & Cooke, 2000; Nicholls, 1994; Palmer et al., 2001; Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002).

In our case study, we have found that the McMillan and Chavis (1986) psychological sense of community (PSOC) theory provides insight and perspectives into how individuals experience emotions associated with identity change. In addition, our model further expands upon the McMillan and Chavis model by introducing a new phase we identify as a sense of evolvment. In the next section we illustrate how the ELIMAR model phases integrate the PSOC.

Community Membership and Disruption

When the initial budget cuts were announced, many university stakeholders reacted with denial. Stakeholders were either not aware of the magnitude of the impending organizational crisis or, if aware, they were unable to embrace the immediacy or inevitability that the change was indeed happening. A clear separation in organizational hierarchy among the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff resulted in communication barriers, tension, and distrust. Members of the university community filled in the gaps with hearsay and rumor. McMillan and Chavis (1986) referred to this as the distinct boundaries that separate membership. Although by the time those in administration announced dramatic changes were necessary to achieve financial sustainability for the University, community members were already experiencing the difficult emotions associated with the impending loss of programs and fellow colleagues. The meaning of tenure was shaken and fear of the unknown was pervasive. Involvement with unions and legal representation added another layer of complexity and ambiguity. Those in administration breached trust with faculty and staff and disrupted the important "sense of community belonging." What was once a community of emotional safety and security was now a community of constant unpredictability.

The actualization of loss of colleagues through forced faculty retrenchments, early retirement incentives, program eliminations, and reduction in staff positions further impacted the psychological sense of community. For many faculty who had devoted years of time and energy to specific programs, having those programs eliminated was devastating. A complicated mix of relief and guilt was felt by surviving faculty, along with the realization the community of the past was certainly not the same. While

support and collegiality from fellow faculty members rallied across all three campuses, many faculty and staff experienced feelings of anger, frustration, confusion, anxiety, and distrust.

Mutual Influence and Resistance

Trust is the foundational cornerstone of mutual influence. The University had experienced several presidents and provosts over several years, resulting in a tenuous level of trust at the highest level of leadership. An interim president was hired to make the difficult budgetary cuts, and many decisions appeared to be made not only without heart, but also without significant faculty input. This left a shared governance model questionable and the sense of mutual influence by the faculty greatly compromised. Anxiety about the sustainability of the University and what, if any, influence the faculty had on future changes became a topic of everyday discourse. University community members became more vocal at university-wide conversations and self-organized to seek alternative action plans to offset impending retrenchments. Administration did not fully consider a report about alternatives to retrenchment, which reduced trust again between administration and faculty.

Fulfillment of Needs and Repurposing

This component focuses on how communities have the holistic capacity to fulfill physical, spiritual, cultural, and emotional needs of the members. The integration of needs across these domains highlights the crossover between personal and professional identity. Specific to our case study, elimination of programs or retrenchments of faculty members translated to deep personal and professional losses. For many adults, their "work identity" is a large part of their personal identity. When job insecurity is a reality, even in tenure positions, the crossover between professional and personal identity becomes blurred.

The blurring of professional and personal identity is common in academic positions. This is especially true of faculty who devote numerous years of study to a discipline, department, and university. To have their program eliminated, regardless of the reason, may be experienced as a significant loss both personally and professionally. Additionally, it may feel as a devaluing of their respective discipline, which may equate to a devaluing of their life's work.

Shared Emotional Connection

Individual faculty created their own sense of community as they attempted to make shared meaning of the change experience. Student support occurred through rallies and demonstrations, as well as a variety of community discussions on how to adapt to what was a call for “new identity.” While the change process was difficult, and experienced differently by all involved, it was a shared emotional community experience. With a new president at the helm, his emotionally responsive leadership style became quickly evident. He immediately guided the healing process for the faculty and staff by naming the emotional side of the change process, while looking for the uniqueness and strengths of the University. A shared sense of positive emotional connection among community members began to slowly surface as barriers broke down to retain and grow the student population. New leadership teams were brought in and the rebuilding of trust was becoming more evident. Symbolically, the president changed the location of his office from up on the hill to directly in the epicenter of the campus, as did the provost several months later. This symbolic gesture served to physically place the president in the shared community experience. Weekly communication to all faculty, staff, and students modeled transparent and emotionally-based communication. The rebuilding was titrated at a pace that was manageable for many. Slowly a feeling of innovation and creativity was being unleashed in the development of the institution as a new identity was emerging.

Sense of Evolvement

Further expanding on the McMillan and Chavis (1986) four-component model of psychological sense of community, the ELIMAR model’s final phase is called Evolvement. In this phase faculty members experienced both individual and group efforts to move forward the tasks of restructuring, realignment, and repurposing. Community members began to see the benefit of reciprocity and accepted new initiatives as a community working toward a common vision. The sense of community extended further from the University and into the larger community. Marketing the unique characteristics of being in the state’s most populated center with potential for exciting internships, community engagement activities, and career possibilities brought new donors and community partners to the funding table. Positive recognition was forthcoming as the media began to focus on the positive University community events. The University was awarded with the designation of “best

places for adult learners to gain an education in the state,” highlighting a positive core identity for an environment for non-traditional, commuter, and traditional residential students to flourish. The “University for Everyone” became an identity that resonated with many. The concepts and values of a metropolitan university were still aligned with the vision of the University. However, the actual marketing language shifted slightly to ensure students who studied online or abroad also could envision their place within the university context.

The phase of evolvement also recognizes that change is inevitable and expected. This ability to strive for continuous improvement and accept that change is inherent in any nimble organization creates a culture that regards change as normal and a sign of growth and health. Evolvement requires meeting change as an ongoing opportunity for creativity, innovation, and compassion, not as a threat from which to protect.

Identity Repurposing and Implications

Organizational change efforts are very emotive events. Some people are ready to grow and change almost immediately, while others are hurt, stuck, and want to keep the status quo. Leaders must not ignore or resist dealing with community members’ resistance in response to the change. There is much to be learned from listening to the concerns of others who question or initially resist. At a basic emotional level, to be heard is a human need. Whenever possible, leaders should intentionally increase mutual influence through shared governance channels, keeping in mind that such participation leads to a psychological sense of community belonging. When the community feels a sense of belonging, mutual influence, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connections, their ability to accept change often is a smoother process. This shared emotional awareness for leaders generates psychological ownership and often a renewed commitment toward the organization’s mission and vision for its long-term health and sustainability.

Conclusion

Most organizational change undermines existing structural arrangements, creating confusion, conflict, distrust, and uncertainty (Bohman & Deal, 2008). If leaders do not honor the loss of the past, the move to the future seems more difficult. Change almost always benefits some people and may isolate or hurt others. A holistic consideration of

organizational transformation requires that leaders pay equal attention both to structural changes and the inevitable emotional reactions of those who are expected to implement transformation changes.

The field of leadership studies has accumulated enough evidence to move toward a general acceptance of affective influences on decision making and the importance of EI (Lerner et al., 2015). Emotions are felt both individually and collectively, and in many instances, emotional contagion can spread throughout the psychological sense of community. We believe leaders need to remain vigilant about the influence of emotions at all levels and work diligently to understand the primary role of emotions during any change process. In this article, we proposed the ELIMAR model, building on existing models and nesting within the psychological sense of community theory as a useful framework in understanding the non-linear and emotionally-embedded experience of identity reformation. The benefits for identity repurposing are greatly enriched when leaders at all levels understand how emotions are both central and essential to identity change and are explicitly considered as the bedrock of community development.

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