The Paradox of (not) Belonging: A Phenomenological Analysis of
Contingent Group Membership in Higher Education

By
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Abstract

Colleges and universities are similar to many other organizations in that they have employees, clients, stakeholders, vendors, cultures, goals, leadership, and hierarchies. Colleges and universities also have contingent group members; those who belong, yet do not belong. This dissertation examines the experiences of three types of contingent group members situated in the university organizational structure: international graduate students, ADA university staff whose roles support students with disabilities, and adjunct professors. This study argues that there are three distinct types of contingent group members: outsiders within (i.e., international graduate students), individuals with a courtesy stigma (i.e., ADA university staff), and contract workers (i.e., adjunct professors). There are few communication studies that focus on the common phenomenological experiences of contingent group members. Phenomenological analysis of participant journal entries and participant-elicited photography facilitated the understanding of the communicative experiences of contingent group membership. Analyzing the complexities of contingent group membership through the common socialization experiences of the three contingent groups revealed six dominant themes. Stories of anticipation and the experiences of joining their respective target groups emerged in the theme (1) Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry. This theme includes the participants' expectations and the emotional outcomes of contingent group membership. The second theme revealed that all participant groups experienced (2) Stigma Shock as a result of stigmatizing messages from their target groups. These messages were unanticipated, surprising, and hurtful. The participants' encounters with socially constructed communicative barriers appear as a theme dubbed (3) Suspended in Liminality. Ultimately, experiences of liminality isolated participants, resulting in the fourth theme (4) Hesitant Identification. This theme explores how these barriers impeded group identification, as

well as relational development with others. The participants strategically used communication to manage their contingent group roles, which are represented in the fifth theme, (5) Communication Strategies. Finally, in theme six, (6) The Paradox of (not) Belonging, participant journals reflect the essence of contingent group membership and how they experience (not) belonging. Without exception, the study participants from all three groups experienced contingent group membership in similar and meaningful ways. By contextualizing research to explore the contingent group member experience within a single type of organization, institutions of higher education, I contribute to our understanding of member role and organizational socialization by expanding Jablin's (1987, 2010) organizational assimilation model. The findings of this research contribute to scholarly knowledge about the liminal space of contingent group status. Organizational assimilation is the preferred outcome for those whose primary quest is to fit in with and match the expectations of bona fide organizational members. It is important to understand members of higher education's organizational identification because identification can influence important individual outcomes, such as psychological well-being (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). This project expands existing knowledge about the communicative experiences of contingent group members' organizational socialization and identification, which help to discover new ways to foster inclusion for contingent groups. Theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and future directions for research are also reviewed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What does it feel like to be in a group, but yet not fully part of a group? Step-parents, family members of individuals with a mental illness, temporary staff, HIV/AIDS volunteer workers, refugees, white antiracists, LGBTQ allies, first-generation college students, immigrants, and contract workers all share a common experience: contingent group membership. Contingent group members exist in a liminal space of identification where they simultaneously belong, yet do not belong to a target social group. There may not be a more relevant and important time to examine the communicative experiences of contingent group members. Group identification and interactions with "others" has intensified due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic hardships, as well as the cultural-political upheaval that resulted from the systematic racial violence targeting Black and Asian communities in 2020-2021 in the United States, which has led to the Black Lives Matters movement and Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage awareness. In this time of crisis, the nation is experiencing a deepening divide between liberals and conservatives as they faced a particularly intense 2020 presidential election year. Pertinent to this time of unrest and division, the aim of this research is to explore the lived experiences of people who are studying and working at the margins by phenomenologically exploring the common and unique lived experiences of contingent group members.

Forming, maintaining, and transforming group memberships are inherently communicative processes (Allen, 2011; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hecht et al., 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These are important processes because positive group identification may advantageously impact an individual's self-concept. However, the experiences of contingent group members have yet to be fully theorized from a communication perspective. For this reason, communication scholars have an opportunity to reimagine the processes of group

identification and assimilation in relation to the lived experiences of contingent group membership.

Groups act as sources of identity for individuals (Scott et al., 1998). Individuals identify themselves with a target group to provide meaning and construct a sense of self (Gist & Goldstein Hode, 2017). When individuals become bona fide group members, they are allowed to participate in the group's activities and claim full membership status. The term "bona fide member" is used in legal language to mean "a member, according to an organization's established membership criteria, who participates in the organization to further its lawful purposes" or simply "a member in good standing" (Legal Definitions Dictionary, n.d.). Bona fide groups can be identified by the group's boundaries, which are simultaneously stable and permeable as defined by the group members, and by the reciprocal relationship between the group and the environment in which it is situated (Buchalter & Frey, 2003). Conversely, contingent group membership is provisional belongingness to a target group where bona fide membership is constrained by communication barriers that are governed by the target group (Collins, 1999; Goffman, 1963; Gossett, 2002). Being a member of a target group with contingencies implies identification with the group on some level and acceptance from group members with conditions and limitations (Hughey, 2012; Kulik et al., 2008; Mehta & Farina, 1988; Ostman & Kjellin, 2002).

Contingent group membership relegates certain group members to a liminal space (Jeyaraj, 2004) with predetermined, socially constructed boundaries that may prohibit progression to bona fide group membership. This in-between space (Jeyaraj, 2004; Turner, 1974) positions group members to simultaneously belong, yet not belong to a target social group. Some privileges are extended to contingent group members that non-group members do not share.

However, those who are not granted bona fide group membership have limited power and restricted authority (Goffman, 1963). This research theoretically and empirically explored contingent group membership in relation to the scholarly concepts: (a) outsiders within (Collins, 1986), (b) courtesy stigma (Goffman, 1963), and (c) contract workers (Gossett, 2002).

Outsiders within (Collins, 1986, 1999; Orbe, 1998) is a concept where minority out-group members attempt to co-exist with dominant in-group members. The dominant majority in-group is the target group for outsiders within. The notion of outsiders within is relevant to a number of marginalized populations based on having a level of distinctiveness making such identities different and excluded from the privileged in-group. Collins (1986) among other scholars began to explore the outsider within concept through the experiences of Black women in predominately White, masculine organizations. Bona fide group membership is socially constrained for outsiders within due to their marginalized and often stigmatized out-group belonging. In short, individuals' difference from a dominant in-group keeps them in a liminal status because they can never truly belong in organizational structures that were structured to privilege certain identities.

Group members with a courtesy stigma (Goffman, 1963; Mehta & Farina, 1988; Ostman & Kjellin, 2002) are in-group individuals who choose or desire membership in a stigmatized group due to having alliances with out-group members/groups or due to changes in their social standing. For instance, White anti-racists who engage in activism to support stigmatized racial groups often experience courtesy stigma (Hughes, 2012). The out-group stigma is extended to the in-group individuals who associate with or are supportive of the target out-group. Yet, bona fide group membership in an out-group is constrained by in-group individuals' lack of stigmatizing attributes and inability to exclusively own the stigma.

Contract workers may work within a regular organizational system but are unique from full-time employees because they are given a pre-established departure date or perhaps expected to exit the organization upon completion of a specific project or out-sourced task (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; George & Chattopadhyay, 2016; Gossett, 2002, 2006; Kreshpaj et al., 2020; Petriglieri et al., 2018). The target group for the contract worker is the temporary employer. Due to the nature of contract work, contract workers may never become bona fide members of their employing organization.

There are few communication studies that focus on the common phenomenological experiences of various types of contingent group members. There are no studies that bring the conversation of outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers into conversation with one another. Each of the three contingent groups face communicative constraints to bona fide group membership. All three types of contingent group membership employ communication strategies for navigating their contingent status (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; Gossett, 2002; Meisenbach; 2010; Orbe, 1998; Petriglieri et al., 2018; White & Gilstrap, 2017). With this project, I expand existing knowledge about the communication of contingent group members' organizational socialization and identification by exploring the lived experiences of contingent group members, which may help to discover new ways to foster inclusion for contingent group members. One contribution of this research is to provide a common conceptual language for communication scholars to use when they discuss the phenomena of contingent group membership. A second contribution to communication literature is the empirical exploration of the similarities and differences across the experiences of these different types of contingent group memberships.

This study will explore each type of contingent group membership within the context of higher education. The three university groups identified for this study are international graduate students as outsiders within, Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility and accommodation university staff (hereafter referred to as ADA university staff) as a group with courtesy stigma, and adjunct professors as contract workers. Respectively each group represents outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers as contingent groups that may have similar and/or unique contingent group membership experiences.

There are currently over a million international students studying in the United States (Institute of Higher Education, 2020). These students come to study in the United States for a host of reasons. For some their home countries have limited economic resources or do not offer the level of education they desire (Rabia, 2016). For others, higher education in the U.S. is a means to gaining prestige and establishing an international profile (Rabia, 2016). However, there are challenges to being an international student. Scholars have found that domestic students often perceive international students in both positive and negative ways. For example, international graduate students are perceived by their peers to be highly intelligent and hard-working; as well as socially and culturally maladjusted, unsociable, different, and having poor language skills (Zhou & Zang, 2014). International students often find it challenging to establish relationships with their domestic peers due to language difference, a preference for affiliation with other international students, and the pressure of trying to fit in with the host student body (Rabia, 2016). Professors may also have the perception that international graduate students lack the motivation, confidence, or skills to fully participate in the classroom (Rabia, 2016). These perceptions may set international students apart from their host university student body; international graduate students are outsiders within. Scholars have identified language barriers,

cultural differences, isolation, and the recent pandemic precautions that restricted foreign student visas (Jordan, 2020) as common contingent group member experiences, which make international graduate students ideal for exploring the organizational socialization and identification of outsiders within.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 19 percent of undergraduates in the 2015-16 school year reported having a disability (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). The large majority of U.S. colleges and universities have staff who organize and monitor the school's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and/or Title II of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. ADA university staff act as advisors to and advocates for students with disabilities. These staff are also tasked with working collaboratively with partners across campuses to ensure that all aspects of the campus experience are inclusive for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are often subjected to stigmatization by their peers and professors due to developmental, emotional, physical and/or psychiatric differences (Baker et al., 2012; Bettencourt et al., 2018; Rillotta et al., 2018; Rochette & Loiselle, 2012). ADA university staff are privy to and sympathetic with the experiences of students with disabilities and their stigma (Barger, 2016; Kattari et al., 2018; Rochette & Loiselle, 2012). According to Barger (2016), ADA university staff who provide services, advocacy, or care to the stigmatized share the stigma of students (Goffman, 1963). While ADA university staff have access to operate on behalf of students with disabilities by way of association and allyship, they may lack full authority to assert their ideas within the stigmatized student body. ADA university staff currently face new challenges with accommodating students during the university's coronavirus recovery efforts. The ADA university staff are an ideal group

for exploring contingent member organizational socialization and identification because they experience a courtesy stigma due to the support they provide to a stigmatized student group.

Adjunct professors represent a growing source of precarious, contract labor in academia (Brennan & Magness, 2018; Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Mapes, 2019). According to New Faculty Majority (2020), a publication that supports non-tenure track faculty, there over 700,000 adjunct faculty in U.S. colleges and universities. Adjunct professors are hired by schools on a contractual, part-time basis as opposed to the traditional university model of full-time employment. There are challenges to being a contract employee. These instructors teach many of the same courses tenure track and tenured professors do, however they may not have a designated office space, computers, or other technology provided (Mapes, 2019). Adjunct professors are paid considerably less than permanent professors and, as part-time or temporary employees, often are not extended financial benefits such as health care, retirement, and promotional opportunities (Brennan & Magness, 2018; Feldman & Turnley, 2001). A significant challenge for adjunct professors is the precarity of one- to three-year employment contracts (Brennan & Magness, 2018). Many adjunct professors are not allowed to participate in student selection or hiring decisions, and most cannot make independent decisions regarding curriculum and research. Adjunct faculty are given fewer opportunities for training and upward mobility (Concordia University-Portland, 2019). Furthermore, tenured faculty may negatively label adjunct employment status (Mapes, 2019). Currently, many universities are not reappointing adjunct professors as a means to cost-cutting due to the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic (Dickler, 2020; Valbrun; 2020). Adjunct professors' precarious, non-permanent status within the university setting makes this group ideal for exploring contract workers, as a form of contingent group membership, organizational socialization and identification.

Jablin's (1987, 2010) organizational assimilation model was used as a theoretical framework for this project. Organizational assimilation involves attempts by an organization to prioritize organizational identification and values. It attempts to minimize individual identity concerns and differences among its members to effectively participate in the group by conforming to its structures (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Organizational assimilation is the preferred outcome for those whose primary quest is to fit in with and match the expectations of bona fide organizational members. The process of organizational assimilation is divided into two sub-processes: socialization and individualization. Socialization is the process by which a group informs individuals in ways that meet the group's needs. As newcomers join and participate in a group, they learn about the group and its history, values, culture, and procedures (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Equally important is the reciprocal process of individualization. Individualization is the process a members go through to better satisfy their ideas about how the organization can best be operated, as well as attempts to mold the organization to meet their personal needs (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Jablin's (1987, 2001) model documents a four-phase process of organizational assimilation for new organizational members. The four phases are: (a) anticipatory socialization, (b) encounter, (c) metamorphosis, and (d) exit (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010).

Individuals change and evolve as they progress through the learning and role adjustment processes of socialization (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). As individuals communicate with organizational members, they gain an understanding of the group. Additionally, through the socialization process, the organization comes to know the group and themselves. Through this social interaction, individuals are granted group membership. A social contract and self-concept begin to take shape as individuals develop a perception of belongingness to the organization.

This sense of affiliation often contributes to individuals' positive self-esteem (Allen 2011; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1989; Goffman, 1963; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) helps to inform the present research by linking the communicative process of organizational assimilation to individuals' identity and identification. Individuals categorize their social environments (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) by perceiving and noting socially- and materially-constructed attributes such as age, sex, physical characteristics, (dis)abilities, educational attainment, income, profession/occupation, religious affiliation, and values (Allen, 2011). Identification cues psychological grouping of individuals into in-groups and out-groups (Allen, 2011; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Feelings of solidarity can cause group members to share some degree of emotional connection with one another and to the group; which can influence psychological and emotional outcomes, such as well-being and a sense of belonging (Allen 2011; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1989; Goffman, 1963; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Contingent group members may not have a strong sense of identification with a target group, which may limit their motivation to participate, be in good standing, reap the benefits of membership, or behave in ways that are indicative of membership.

The objective of this project is to expand the organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) by exploring the complexities of contingent group membership through the common socialization experience shared by three different types of contingent group members in higher education: international students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors. Institutions of higher education are highly institutionalized and ideal sites for the exploration of assimilation and identification. Universities are often portrayed as, and have been found to be, quite stable organizational forms of institutions (Stensaker, 2015) because they are

hierarchically structured, most often the organizational communication is prescriptive, formalized, written, and archived (Lammers & Barbour, 2006), and are resistant to radical change (Ford & Ford, 1995; Stensaker, 2015). Students, faculty, and staff represent common levels of stratification in institutions of higher education, which carry implications for both socialization and identification.

This study expands current knowledge about contingent group membership by exploring, from an interpretive perspective, the experiences of those relegated to the liminal space of contingent group membership. For this project, I will employ a qualitative phenomenological approach. Phenomenological analysis facilitates understanding of how the everyday, intersubjective world is constituted (Crotty, 1998). The data for this project have been collected by conducting a journal study with photo elicitation from contingent group members affiliated with institutions of higher education. The next chapter reviews relevant literature in order to appropriately situate the research in existing scholarship.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to appropriately frame this phenomenological research project, literature on organizational assimilation, identity and identification, contingency group membership, outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers will be reviewed. This also includes an overview of higher education, which is the context for this study. This chapter closes with a description of the populations that were sampled: international students, university staff who serve students with disabilities, and adjunct professors

Organizational Assimilation

Organizational assimilation involves attempts by an organization to minimize individual identity concerns and differences among its members so that members may effectively participate in the group by conforming to its structures (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Organizational assimilation is the preferred outcome for individuals whose primary quest is to fit in with and match the expectations of bona fide organizational members.

The process of organizational assimilation is divided into two sub-processes: socialization and individualization. Socialization is the process by which a group imposes its norms on individuals in ways that meet the group's needs. As newcomers join and participate in a group, they learn about the group and its history, values, culture, and procedures. Socialization happens when established members influence prospective members (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Equally important is the reciprocal process of individualization. Individualization is the process members go through to better satisfy their ideas about how the organization can best be operated, as well as attempts to mold the organization to meet their personal needs (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010).

The Jablin (1987, 2001) organizational assimilation model documents a four-phase process of organizational assimilation for new organizational members. The four phases are: (a) Anticipatory Socialization, (b) Encounter, (c) Metamorphosis, and (d) Exit (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). Each of these phases is described below.

Anticipatory Socialization

The initial phase, Anticipatory Socialization, occurs prior to actually joining an organization or vocation. Individuals gain impressions of future organizational and vocational environments through several sources to help them develop expectations and anticipation about the organization or vocation and their new role (Hoffner, 2006; Jablin 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010; Powers & Myers, 2017). Jablin (1987, 2001) and Kramer (2010) discuss two types of anticipatory socialization—vocational anticipatory socialization and organizational anticipatory socialization.

Kramer (2010) explains vocational anticipatory socialization is "the process of selecting a role, vocation, career, or job to perform in some organization" (p. 26). This process begins as early as childhood when individuals form expectations about careers, jobs, and organizations prior to entering them. There are five sources of information that affect role anticipatory socialization: (a) family, (b) media, (c) peers, (d) education, and (e) previous organizational experience (Jablin 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010).

Jablin (2001) states families are the primary source from which young people draw to establish expectations regarding their future work experiences. Individuals gather information through communication with family members that helps to determine the nature and direction of their careers (Lucas, 2011). Family-based communication includes discussions regarding general work, career advice, and sharing stories about work experiences (Kramer, 2010; Levine &

Hoffner, 2006). In addition, early educational experiences are significant sources of vocational anticipatory socialization. Classroom activities such as discussions, research reports, presentations, and the use of textbooks inform students about possible careers (Kramer, 2010; Powers & Myers, 2017). Similar to the influence of family, peers are a source of vocational anticipatory socialization (Kramer, 2010; Levine & Hoffner, 2006). Peer influence is an important part of growing up and influences behaviors and values early in life. Peers continue to influence occupational choices later in life as they confirm or disconfirm previous choices and future career changes to be important into adulthood (Kramer, 2010; Levine & Hoffner, 2006). Previous organizational experiences influence vocational anticipatory socialization. Internships, part-time employment, volunteerism, and full-time work experiences, for example, influence how individuals perceive organizational functions and attitudes regarding work (Kramer, 2010; Levine & Hoffner, 2006). These experiences create work-related expectations and influence future occupational choices. Finally, media representations of roles and work attitudes are a source of vocational anticipatory socialization (Kramer, 2010; Powers & Myers, 2017). Exposure to media often begins prior to the school experience. Television, books, social media, and other media communicate messages about occupations that influence individuals well into adulthood (Jablin, 2001). Vocational anticipatory socialization is an ongoing process that influences occupational and role choices (Lucas, 2011).

In contrast, organizational anticipatory socialization is a shorter-term process that individuals undertake when choosing an organization they wish to join (Kramer, 2010). In other words, organizational anticipatory socialization is a process of organizational choice (Jablin, 2001). The process is a mutual selection between organizations and individuals. The process involves information seeking about organizations, which is a communicative effort. According to

Jablin (1987), "[t]he main activities the individual engages in at this stage are forming expectations about jobs--transmitting, receiving, and evaluating information with prospective employers and making decisions about employment" (p. 595).

As a result of one's education, skills and abilities, previous work experience, and the like, as well as the organization's recruitment procedures, individuals develop expectations about what life will be like in specific organizations (Jablin, 1987; Kramer, 2010). With this set of expectations, the organization and individuals decide if there is a good fit. If there is mutual agreement, at this point individuals become new organizational members. What follows is the encounter phase of the organizational assimilation model, which is the process of entering organizations as new organizational members.

Encounter

Encounter is the point-of-entry to an organization where individuals become members and assume organizational roles. Encounter is the process that individuals go through when they are acclimating to an organization's culture (Jablin, 2001). There is typically an experience of adjustment between the members' expectations and the reality of their role. For example, new members may grapple with uncertainty and role ambiguity, with unclear performance expectations, unfamiliar organizational culture, or unusual team members' demeanors (S'lebarska et al., 2019).

During this initial encounter, members learn organizational roles, how to perform and relate to other group members, organizational norms, and organizational culture (Kramer, 2010), as well as the emotional culture (Choi, 2018) of the organization. New group members actively seek out information through communication by asking overt or indirect questions, engaging in conversation, or by observing group peers, organizational tasks, and performance appraisal

processes, as well as making attempts to develop a social support network (Jablin, 1987, 2001). This phase of the socialization model "involves a pattern of day-to-day experiences in which individuals are subjected to the reinforcement policies and practices of the organization and its members" (Jablin, 1987, p. 956). Organizations communicate to new members about the organization's work expectations, as well as the prevailing values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms of the organization. "Learning the ropes" is a colloquial phrase often used to refer to a formal on-boarding process that likely includes training and a probationary period. This process helps new members understand both the rules and norms of the organization.

Member negotiation is an important element in the encounter phase of socialization. Member negotiation, as defined by Scott and Myers (2010) is "a set of ongoing processes (intentional and unintentional) through which knowledgeable individuals and focal organizations engage, disengage, and accomplish reciprocal—but still asymmetrical—influence over the intended meanings for an individual's participation in organizational functions" (p. 80). Membership negotiation is an informal process individuals engage in as new members to distinguish themselves, break into a group, and become a good organizational member. Member negotiation is the ability or inability to incorporate previous work experience, skills, and knowledge into new organizational roles (Endacott & Myers, 2019; McPhee & Zaug, 2009). Endacott and Myers (2019) explain that when new group members have previous organizational experience that is considered meaningful to the structures of the group, they often feel more involved in the organization. These experienced newcomers are recognized as contributing members to the group. The recognition facilitates their integration into the organization and helps to establish stronger organizational identification (Endacott & Myers, 2019). Conversely, if established organizational members resent the new members (Kramer, 2010), if their expertise

lacks legitimacy in the new context (Endacott & Myers, 2019), or they do not receive recognition for their previous organizational experience, the new members feel less valuable and distanced from the organization (Endacott & Myers, 2019). An example of this distance is when new hires have fresh ideas and new ways of seeing challenges, yet they are not listened to because they have not yet become an insider (Rollag et al., 2004). Another example is a newcomer with prior work experience who has a strong interest in gaining some control in the organization. Those in the existing organizational hierarchy may consider the new person a troublemaker or one who challenges the status quo (S'lebarska et al., 2019). Working out such tensions between newcomers and established organizational members is part of the encounter phase.

The encounter phase can affirm or deny the newcomer's expectations (Jablin, 1987). For instance, Jablin (1987) found if new group members' expectations developed during anticipatory socialization match the reality of the organization, "the encounter stage is one of reaffirmation and reinforcement of existing beliefs and behaviors" (p. 596). On the other hand, if new members' expectations are not congruent with organizational reality, the encounter stage involves a "destructive phase which serves to detach the individual from his [*sic*] former expectations" (Jablin, 1987, p. 596). The encounter phase ends when individuals no longer feel new.

Metamorphosis

During metamorphosis, individuals become established as accepted, participating members of an organization. Metamorphosis is marked by a psychological change when individuals are no longer considered to be novice. Once accepted as group members, individuals manage their roles both cooperatively and innovatively, adapting through transitions and changes. In this stage, individuals will likely have gained an understanding of the organizational

system, not only their own tasks, but the rules, procedures, and informally accepted practices as well (Dailey, 2016; Jablin, 1987, 2001). During metamorphosis organizational members likely have become accustomed to the norms of the organization and their coworkers, and often feel accepted by peers as trusted and valued individuals (Jablin, 1987, 2001).

Organizational members who reach metamorphosis may attempt to individualize their organizational role by creating an individual identity within the organization, staking out their territory, or obligating the organization to adapt to their values, needs, or expectations in some way (Jablin, 2001). Both individuals and the organization experience change and must adapt to this change throughout the metamorphosis stage of the socialization process (Dailey, 2016).

At this point, organizational members develop a new self-image, establish interpersonal relationships, acquire organizational values, and develop relevant behaviors (Jablin, 1987, 2001). The metamorphosis phase is typically a time of growth, acceptance, increased role responsibility, and being established as an insider. This phase is marked by individuals feeling they contribute to the organization. Often new members view veteran members who are in the metamorphosis stage as sources of information. This adaptation process may continue during the exit stage of the socialization process as the individuals' organizational role may continue to change (Dailey, 2016). Experiencing bona fide membership allows individuals to manage their membership cooperatively and innovatively as they become increasingly aware of the organization's culture and navigate organizational change (Kramer, 2010).

Exit

In the final phase of the organizational assimilation model, individuals transition out of their roles and/or disengage from the organization. Leaving a role or exiting from an organization can be either voluntary or involuntary. Individuals choose to leave organizations for

a variety of positive and negative reasons. Individuals who have reached the metamorphosis stage of organizational assimilation who voluntarily leave an organization put a considerable amount of thought into how they want their departure communicated; indeed, it is a calculated event (Klatzke, 2016; Tan & Kramer, 2012). When individuals leave organizations involuntarily—due to mergers and acquisitions, termination, a reduction in the work force, or other organizational decisions—the motivations for communication in the disengagement process are different. Kramer (2010) suggests the duration and process of disengagement may vary depending on the exit. Whether someone is going through voluntary or involuntary disengagement, and regardless of the motivation, communication is important to the disengagement process. Communicating exit is typically done in four general steps: (a) preannouncement, (b) announcement of exit, (c) actual exit, and (d) postexit (Jablin, 2001).

Communication during the preannouncement step involves voluntary and involuntary messaging. Once individuals decide to leave or once they learn of the end of their transition from an organization, they may disclose the decision to spouses, close family members, friends, or coworkers (Klatzke, 2016; Kramer, 2010; Tan & Kramer, 2012). Individuals might subconsciously communicate their impending exit, such as a change in attitude, disengagement with the organization, and/or a decrease in organizational commitment (Kramer, 2010; Tan & Kramer, 2012).

Eventually, either individuals will make their leaving known or the organization will announce that members are leaving. This is the announcement of exit, which is the next step in the exit process (Jablin, 2010). Communication during this step helps individuals to solidify leaving. For organizational members, the announcement helps to create accounts and

justifications for why individuals are voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the organization (Jablin, 2010).

Final communication begins once individuals have formally left the organization or role, and this is part of the actual exit step. This phase is what Klatzke (2016) coins "spreading the word" (p. 46). In general, this is when individuals make the decision to inform everyone else. Communication during the actual exit step is generally focused on how exiting individuals behave, as well as how the remaining organizational members respond to their disengagement (Kramer, 2010). If the exit is amicable, there may be celebrations to honor persons as they leave. If the exit is not amicable, individuals may simply leave without ceremony or organizational acknowledgement (Kramer, 2010).

The final step in organizational exit is the post-exit step. When organizational members voluntarily or involuntarily leave, the organization goes through an adjustment period. When individuals leave a work team, are promoted to a new role, or exit the organization, remaining group members attempt to understand how the organization is altered (Kramer, 2010). At the same time, exiting individuals renegotiate their identity as a former organizational member, as they are no longer associated with the organization (Tan & Kramer, 2012). Either way, both the organization and exiting individuals process the separation by making sense of the experience and lessons learned (Dailey, 2016; Kramer, 2010).

As presented in the literature, the organizational assimilation process appears to be a clean, linear progression. However, scholars have pointed out this process is a more dynamic and fluid endeavor than the model suggests (Allen, 1996; Bullis, 1999; Clair, 1999; Dailey, 2016; Davis & Myers, 2012; Garner & Petersen, 2018; Gist, 2016). In reality members move in and out of the phases in the Organizational Assimilation Model as they face changes and incorporate new

norms (Dailey, 2016). This study explores how contingent group members experience organizational assimilation, but first it is important to understand how scholars have expanded and challenged Jablin's (1987, 2001) original model of organizational assimilation.

Expanding and Challenging the Organizational Assimilation Model

The complexities of member role and organizational assimilation have been explored, challenged, and expanded by communication scholars. For example, the entrance phase of organizational assimilation is expanded by Dailey's (2016) research on organizational rotation programs. Davis and Myers (2012) studied the exit phase of the model and documented phases of communication group members go through when they leave an organization. Garner and Petersen (2018) researched involuntary exit from the perspective of noncompliant organizational members. Clair (1999), Bullis (1999), and Allen (1996) challenge the model, arguing it is limiting and privileges certain groups. Gist (2016) questions the assumption that metamorphosis is the appropriate goal for every organization. Collectively, their research helps to broaden our knowledge of organizational assimilation and adds complexity to our understanding of how individuals enter, take part in, and leave organizations.

Dailey (2016) expanded the socialization process by researching the contrast between member role and organizational socialization. Her study explored employees' experiences in a rotational program and how they adapted to multiple roles within an organization rather than just one position. The study was conducted at a United States-based financial services firm that provided credit cards, banking services, and loans to over 50 million customers. The organization studied over 10,000 individuals worldwide (Dailey, 2016). Approximately 3,000 employees worked at its headquarters in the Midwest, where the organization had a rotational program with analytics, business technology, finance, marketing, and operations tracks.

In the anticipatory socialization phase, Dailey (2016) found every time the employees rotated positions, they formed more realistic expectations because the rotating position program participants observed other roles firsthand. The employees experienced the encounter and metamorphosis phases differently as well, as they continually encountered new roles with every rotation. The workers in Dailey's (2016) study, however, did not experience role and organizational socialization simultaneously. She found in their first rotation, employees adapted to their role and the organization similarly to traditional employees. Upon subsequent job rotations, the employees were already familiar with the organization and did not undergo organizational socialization. Dailey (2016) found this subsequent rotation differentiates rotational employees from past conceptualizations of socialization because role and organizational socialization do not occur simultaneously. In addition, Dailey's (2016) study found rotational employees also experienced the exit phase differently. Knowing their roles were temporary with fixed timelines, participants planned their exit in anticipation of a new rotation within the organization. In fact, Dailey (2016) noted, "[t]his planned exit might be a socialization turning point that influences role adjustment. Workers who know they will soon rotate into a new position might feel the need to adjust to roles quicker" (p. 190). Dailey's (2016) study expands the organizational socialization model when considering the rotational program's influence on role and organizational socialization, as well as member exit.

A study of member-planned organizational exit and the impacts on other group members was conducted by Davis and Myers (2012). The researchers interviewed departing sorority members at two universities, examining members' attitudes, behaviors, and communication changes as their exit approached. With this study, the researchers expanded the exit phase of the socialization model by suggesting there are subphases of deidentification members experience

when leaving a group (Davis & Myers, 2012). The study identified three phases: (a) focus on the future, (b) focus on the present, and (c) focus on the past and future.

The first subphase of deidentification, focus on the future, is a phase where members: (a) use "last" language to mark incidents, (b) are concerned with finishing tasks, and (c) anticipate a post-exit role in a new group (Davis & Myers, 2012). As members get closer to the date of exit, they enter the second subphase of deidentification, the focus on the present phase. In this phase, the departing members tend to avoid discussing their departure or the future, and thus, their emphasis is on the present (Davis & Myers, 2012). Members turn their focus on caring for interpersonal relationships, rather than the departure. Davis and Myers (2012) found topic avoidance is used by both exiting members and staying members. If the future is discussed, members often admit they are facing uncertainty. The final phase before exit is the third subphase of deidentification: focus on the past and future. According to Davis and Myers (2012), in this phase, members engage in the rites of separation, such as group celebrations, and reflect on memories. Staying members use storytelling to mark the event and may feel sympathetic, resentful, and/or jealous. In contrast, exiting members may feel guilt, regret, and/or uncertainty in the process (Davis & Myers, 2012).

Garner and Petersen (2018) also researched member organizational exit, but from the perspective of noncompliant group members' involuntary exit of an organization. The study examines the tension between membership and organizational practices when members want to maintain their membership status but are pushed out by the organization. The exit phase of Jablin's (1987, 2001) Organizational Assimilation Model is expanded by Garner and Petersen's (2018) research to encompass the complexities of the exit process when organizational leaders attempt to control: (a) the members' exit, (b) sensemaking by the members during and after the

separation processes, and (c) the extension of emotional experiences former group members describe (Garner & Petersen, 2018). The participants in Garner and Petersen's (2018) research described exit as a painful and tenuous process that involved a tension between staying and leaving, which demonstrates the nonlinear process of Jablin's (1987, 2001) model.

The studies cited above are by no means the extent of research exploring and expanding the socialization model. Indeed, scholars challenge the model as privileged, restrictive, and exclusionary. For example, Clair (1999) challenged the socialization model, asserting socialization is devaluing and leading. She is most critical of the anticipatory socialization phase because Clair (1999) argues it implicitly devalues nonorganizational work, for example "parenting, writing, baby-sitting, running a lemonade stand" (Clair, 1999, p. 378). Clair (1999) assesses the model as inattentive to women's voices, and capitalistic in orientation maintaining it overlooks jobs not directly tied to the production of goods and services.

Bullis (1999) chose not to adopt the term "assimilation" in favor of the term "socialization." While not critical of Jablin's (1987, 2001) use of the term assimilation to name interactive processes between individuals and organizations in his model, Bullis (1999) preferred socialization because the term assimilation implies "absorption of a minority group into the main cultural body" (p. 370). Not all scholars acknowledge the restrictive and oppressive aspects of word choice. While this was Bullis' choice, given that the two words describe the same mutual influence, she stated "I see no need to universally employ the term 'assimilation' in favor of 'socialization'" (Bullis, 1999, p. 370). Bullis' (1999) particularity in language reflects her commitment to avoiding terms in theory and/or practice that subjugate or demean groups or individuals.

Bullis (1999) faulted the basic conceptualizations of socialization and the use of phase models as limiting and constraining. She viewed the socialization process as defined by organizational discourse, rather than being defined by the individuals who enter and leave the organization. Bullis (1999) was critical of the stages within socialization models, deeming them as disqualifying of alternative approaches. While supporting the continued use of stage models, Bullis (1999) called for broader outcomes in the individualization process, such as public good, ethics, participation, and service.

Allen (1996) contended women may have experiences that differ from those Jablin's (1987, 2001) model depicts. Allen (1996) suggested the model privileges White men's socialization experiences while discounting women's developmental patterns. For instance, Allen (1996, p. 258) noted, "women often are excluded from informal networks that frequently form powerful, important aspects of socialization processes. Moreover, their needs may differ from men's." Allen (1996) called for additional organizational socialization research using feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 2004), which focuses on power relations and the lives of the marginalized. Feminist standpoint theory posits knowledge is socially situated (Harding 2004). Marginalized groups are situated in ways that make it possible for them to be more aware of things typically outside the purview of those who do not experience marginalization. Allen (1996) encouraged research that addresses emotional tone and such contextual issues as historical, cultural, institutional, organizational, and individual circumstances that might influence newcomers' realities.

Gist (2016) questioned the implicit assumption that the metamorphosis phase is the desired outcome of socialization for all organizations. She asserted "being an established organizational member is sometimes counter to organizational objectives" (Gist, 2016, p. 15).

To illustrate, Gist (2016) suggested metamorphosis in an organization where workplace bullying occurs may not be desirable. Other examples of organizations where short-term membership is ideal, are physical rehabilitation practices or grief support groups (Gist, 2016). Her ethnographic study of service recipients in unemployment organizations considered the metamorphosis experiences of jobless job seekers. Gist's (2016) research examined the assimilation and communication processes of alternative organizations where metamorphosis is not desirable and expedited organizational exit is an objective.

This study focused on the psychological and emotional experiences of individuals who may not be able to progress through the theoretical model of organizational assimilation. Specifically, this study helps to better understanding the experiences of group members who simultaneously belong yet do not belong to a target social group. This study explores the communication of group members who are unlikely to reach the metamorphosis phase as part of their socialization experience. It is important to continue to explore, challenge, and expand the organizational assimilation process because membership is an important part of social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The organizational assimilation process points to competencies required for participating in organizations, social groups, or in society at large.

Generally speaking, the assimilation model articulates the process through which individuals selectively acquire the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes of the group to which they are, or seek to become bona fide members (Kramer, 2010). Through this process individuals' identity and identification can emerge. Literature addressing identity and identification are addressed below.

Identity and Identification

Individuals who share a common social identity tend to affiliate, form, and maintain their identities through memberships in groups. During the process of assimilation, the social values held by the group are transmitted to individuals through social interaction. Individuals can choose to adopt, or not to adopt, these new belief and value systems as their own. Evaluations formed by interacting socially help individuals create social identities (Hecht et al., 2005; Jackson, 2002). Identity and identification have a reciprocal relationship, since "identity structures enable and constrain human behavior (i.e., identification), whereas human behavior (identification) simultaneously (re)produces identity (structure)" (Silva & Sias, 2010, p. 148).

It is important to understand both identity and identification in the context of organizational assimilation. Organizations benefit by having highly identified members because they are more likely to be committed and have high levels of satisfaction, increased tenure, attendance, and performance (Russo, 1998). Highly identified membership results in lower turnover, member decision-making that is in line with organizational goals, and individuals who engage in corporate citizenship (Russo, 1998; Williams & Connaughton, 2010). Individuals benefit from identification by having a sense of belonging, security, and self-efficacy. This results in increased job satisfaction and job involvement for members; often they receive organizational rewards, such as advancement and higher compensation as a result of their organizational commitment (Russo, 1998). Low member identification can result in communicative isolation, negative member attitudes toward the organization, and inappropriate organizational behavior (Gossett, 2002).

Identity

Identity, one's sense and concept of self, is always changing (Silva & Sias, 2010). Individuals create identities by cognitively comparing and contrasting their own attributes to the

attributes of others in a process called self-categorization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Categorizing oneself "helps to reduce the social uncertainty people face about perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that are important for their self-concept, through the creation and consensual validation of a distinct social identity" (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005, p. 71). Identity is formed, maintained, and modified through social interaction. By observing who others are and experiencing particular contexts, individuals make sense of not only who they are, but also how they should interact socially, and what to expect from others (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). "Identity is internalized from, as well as externalized to, social interaction through expectations attached to identities and other social categories" (Hecht et al., 2005, p. 262).

Identity is an ongoing communicative process where the individual develops a sense of who they are in relation to the world around them (Wieland, 2010). Scott et al. (1998) conceptualized "identity as a structure, or a set of rules and resources enacted by members in activity" (p. 147). Through the symbolic meanings of social phenomenon and social interaction, as well as when individuals place themselves in socially recognizable categories, individuals' identities are internalized (Hecht et al., 2005).

A social identity is the portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group. Through a blending of social group affiliations and personal characteristics, one creates a sense of identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which is often informed by the framework of one's life history (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Social identity is a concept that includes an individual's membership in various social groups, for example organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, and age cohort (Ashforth & Mael,

1998). Each group acts as a target or source of identity, which provides meaning that individuals draw upon to construct a sense of self (Gist & Goldstein Hode, 2017).

As originally formulated by Tajfel and Turner (1986) social identity theory introduces the concept of a social identity as a way in which to explain intergroup behavior. Individuals categorize their social environments (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) by perceiving and noting socially and materially constructed attributes such as age, sex, physical characteristics, (dis)abilities, educational attainment, income, profession/occupation, religious affiliation, and values (Allen, 2011). Feelings of solidarity can cause group members to share some degree of emotional connection with one another and to the group. Group members regulate group identity based on the definition of their social category (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Members' attachment to a group is tied to the emotional and psychological protection the group provides (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). The external images and evaluations formed by interacting help individuals create social identities (Hecht, et al., 2005). Individuals who share a common social identity tend to affiliate, form, and maintain their identities and memberships in groups. By interacting socially with other members, individuals are informed of who they are and who they might become (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1989; Hecht, et al., 2005: Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Groups are formed by individuals who think of themselves as members of the same/similar social category. Feeling identified with a group motivates group members to participate, be in good standing, reap the benefits of membership, and behave in ways that are indicative of membership (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). By interacting socially, identification is produced by and continues to produce identity (Scott et al., 1998). Factors such as shared history, liking, similarity, proximity, shared goals, and common

threats increase group identification, which occurs when individuals express or communicate their sense of oneness with the group (Allen, 2011; Sias, 2009).

Identification

Organizational identification is a shared identity with specific attachment to a group where individuals refer to the self in terms of their organizational membership (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Strong social identification occurs when individuals take pride in being part of a target organization and regard membership as a salient social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Group members engage in dynamic and complex communicative processes to shape and utilize identity structures to express their identity (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). When individuals have good standing in their organization, they may participate in discourse that produces the targets of their identification (Scott et al., 1998). Members select and switch between a variety of identification targets to define self in order to interact with others (Gossett, 2002).

Groups create an identification when they are distinct and are in competition with another group. Identification cues psychological grouping of individuals into in-groups and out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which directly impacts one's self-esteem and contributes to perceptions of identification and disidentification (Allen, 2011; Goffman, 1963; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The distinguishing characteristics of in-groups and out-groups directly impact one's self-esteem and contribute to perceptions of identification, belonging, and exclusion. (Allen, 2011; Goffman, 1963; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Oftentimes, individuals cling to the group identity even when it is difficult, disliked, or failing (Tajfel & Turner, 1989).

In-groups and Out-groups

Intergroup competition between in-groups and out-groups is inherent to the cognitive process of social categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The very perception of belonging with a

group implies disassociation with others, which has been found to foster in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In-group favoritism and out-group prejudice are evidenced in a series of empirical studies with randomized zero-history groups (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Brewer & Silver, 1978). In-group favoritism is rooted in a desire to develop and maintain a positive self-concept that is ideally perceived as distinct and valued. Individuals and groups engage in social comparison where they continually evaluate one another's positive and negative attributes (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The subjective evaluation of various social groups results in a status hierarchy (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). The higher a group is assessed in comparison to relevant outgroups, the more social status it holds, which affects the group's level of social power (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) and influence (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Individual group members benefit from their identification with highly ranked social groups due to the positive distinctiveness of their categorizations. Members take on positively valued characteristics of the group as their own, incorporating these attributes as they construct and maintain their social identity (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). The converse is true for stigmatized groups, which are often ranked lower on the social hierarchy, which produces systematic disadvantages to their group members (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Cognitive social categorization often manifests in discourse through labeling. Communities assign labels to groups, communicatively accentuating intergroup differences, developing stereotypes, and stereotype-consistent interpretations of others' identities (Smith, 2007). Allen (2011) explains why labeling is relevant:

What a group is called and how it is described by others, particularly those in power, plays an important role in social relations, because these labels usually are not neutral.

Most often, dominant groups define these names/labels to establish and maintain

hierarchy (p. 27).

Labels often imply hierarchical rank order (Allen, 2011; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). As groups

form and are hierarchically ranked, some groups have access to and control more social, cultural,

and economic power, which systematically constructs and/or constrains access to opportunity.

Systems and structures maintain and reproduce hierarchical dominance for in-groups through

various ideological belief systems related to social identity (Allen, 2011). Such hierarchical

positioning shapes how members see and experience themselves and others in the social world.

As in-groups form and hierarchically arrange, so do out-groups. Out-groups maintain, reproduce,

and protect their identities through various beliefs and philosophies related to their experiences.

Members of stigmatized groups often seek ways to cope with threats to their social

identity by redefining their social identity and managing out-group differences. Individual group

members, dissatisfied with their out-group status, may leave and join or affiliate with a higher-

status group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For instance, individuals' social standing is changed in the

workforce when they work their way up the corporate ladder. Yet, it is not always possible for

people to leave low status groups. Individuals may psychologically distance themselves from the

socially devalued group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), for example when women differentiate

themselves from other women and emphasize the ways they are similar to men. In an attempt to

improve the status of their out-group, individuals may act in ways that improve or change the

social identity of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), for instance via political action or social

protest. Individuals may also use social creativity, which is a set of cognitive strategies used to

downplay the effects of low status social identities, by redefining social identities and out-group

differences (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Out-groups are identified by a distinction of difference from dominant in-groups. Out-groups are generally perceived as a threat to in-groups in some manner and are often perceived as blocking access to resources or hindering in-groups' goals (Meisenbach, 2010). This negative distinction directly impacts the social identity of out-group members. Out-groups' negative differences are often constructed as stigma.

Stigma and Communication

Out-groups are often stigmatized. Stigma is defined as "a socialized, simplified, standardized image of the disgrace of a particular social group" (Smith, 2007, p. 464). Goffman (1963) asserts stigma functions as an identity discrediting mark. Stigma has been categorized by various scholars (e.g., Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Goffman, 1963).

Goffman's (1963) foundational scholarship categorizes stigma as: (a) physical disgrace, (b) blemishes of character, and (c) tribal in nature. Physical stigma is associated with a number of different material realities in relation to one's identity. For instance, physical stigma has been socially constructed around visible physical impairments, non-normative appearances, or material filth (Goffman, 1963). In addition, Goffman (1963) also identified stigma as blemishes of character, which deviate from dominant societal norms and are often evaluated on a moral basis. For instance, social, character, or moral stigmas associated with those who have lower educational attainment, those who struggle with addiction, individuals who engage in radical political activities, homeless or impoverished populations, and individuals diagnosed with mental illness among others. Such stigmas are often ideologically informed. Finally, tribal stigma is distinguished by race, nationality, or religion (Goffman, 1963). Tribal stigmas were generally perceived to have been passed on genetically, for example race and ethnicity, nationality, or generationally, as in the case of religion. Tribal stigma is often associated with non-dominant

differences in origin. Often, tribal stigma is connected with historical discrimination, such as African Americans or Hispanics in the U. S. context, North Africans in the European context, Jewish populations during the Holocaust, or South Africans during Apartheid. Historical discrimination is rooted to contemporary manifestations of racism, white supremacy, and/or ethnocentrism.

Individuals who are part of out-groups often find themselves in contexts dominated by members of the in-group or vice versa. Under certain conditions, non-group members have been allowed to function socially within target groups that are not their own. However, such experiences are generally constrained by a pre-established boundary that demarcates where membership begins and ends (Ballard & Gossett, 2007). Group members who belong, yet do not belong constitute contingent group members.

Contingent Group Membership

Under certain conditions, non-group members are allowed to function within a target group under limited capacity. For instance, Goffman (1963) labeled this phenomenon "courtesy membership" or "contingency membership." Being a contingent member implies identification with the group on some level and acceptance from group members with conditions and limitations (Hughey, 2012; Kulik et al., 2008; Mehta & Farina, 1988; Ostman & Kjellin, 2002). This form of group membership allows for some privileges that non-group members do not share. However, those who are not granted bona fide group membership have limited power and restricted authority under the provisions of the constrained inclusion (Goffman, 1963).

Ballard and Gossett (2007) defined contingent membership as a status where individuals are guest members of a group who occupy a "fixed physical and/or temporal space but are bound by conditional membership" (p. 279). Ballard and Gossett (2007) used the concept of

contingency membership to analyze the spatiotemporal experiences of temporary and contract

workers who have a pre-established departure date within the context of an organizational

system. Many organizations classify temporary and contract workers as a disposable workforce

(Ballard & Gossett, 2007, George & Chattopadhyay, 2016). Temporary and contract workers, as

well as bona fide organizational members, understand contingent members may be dismissed

early or terminated without notice (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; Premji, 2017). "[T]emporary and

contract members can find themselves defined as outsiders and not allowed to participate fully in

the group" (Ballard & Gossett, 2007, p. 293). This spatiotemporal insecurity may cause anxiety

for individuals without expectations for permanency, as well as create tension between

continuous organizational members and contingent members (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; Gossett,

2006; Premji, 2017). Bona fide group members have past, present, and future expectations

relationship connections with one another (Ballard & Gossett, 2007). Bona fide group members

limit contract and temporary workers to communication and relationships that are situated in the

present. Thus, contract and temporary workers struggle to fully integrate into the organization

due to the communicative constraints that limited social interaction that is restricted to the

present (Ballard & Gossett, 2007). Limited social connection creates relational and

communicative distance for the contract and temporary workers (Petriglieri et al., 2018), leaving

them without the benefits of a sense of belonging, security, and self-efficacy group membership

provides. Contract and temporary workers are one example of contingent group members.

Contingent group membership can be granted to individuals under differing

circumstances and in diverse forms. A systematic review of communication literature reveals

three conceptual types of contingent group members (outsiders within, courtesy stigmas, and

contract workers), which are discussed in the next section. Building on Goffman's

characterization (1963) of contingency membership as a restricted and provisional group membership and Ballard and Gossett's spatiotemporal concept (2007) of contingent members, I propose an extended definition of contingent group membership by incorporating Turner's notion (1974) of liminality as a temporal, in-between space. I define contingent group membership as: a status/type of group membership that exists within a liminal space (Jeyaraj, 2004; Turner, 1974) of identification where they simultaneously belong, yet do not belong to a target social group. Contingent group membership is relegated to a liminal space (Jeyaraj, 2004) with predetermined, socially constructed boundaries that may prohibit progression to bona fide group membership.

With this study, I aim to further explore the notion of contingent group membership in relation to the three theoretical concepts: (a) outsiders within, (b) courtesy stigma, and (c) contract workers. Scholars across myriad disciplines have theorized similar phenomena under various bodies of literature naming experiences as outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers. Each is reviewed below. A metatheoretical analysis reveals how these seemingly disparate bodies of literature speak to common communicative experiences that can be studied within the communication discipline as contingent group members. For each type of contingent group membership reviewed below, I define and conceptualize the membership type through extant literature, describe their target group, provide empirical examples, and highlight the role of communication in relationship to their group experiences.

Outsiders Within

Drawing from muted group and standpoint theories, Collins (1986, 1999) conceptualized the scholarly notion of "outsiders within" as a status of Black women. Collins (1986, 1999) posited that historically African American women have long been privy to some of the most

intimate aspects of White society. As family "insiders" they were responsible for childrearing and performed a host of domestic duties, some were even considered honorary family members. Yet, in spite of their involvement, African American women always remained outsiders, knowing they could never truly belong to the White families they served (Collins, 1986, 1999).

Orbe (1998) extended the concept of an outsider within throughout the development of co-cultural theory, which addresses the process of minority out-group members attempting to co-exist with dominant in-groups. A contribution of the co-cultural theory is that it attends to voices that have been muted by dominant voices that have either tacitly or explicitly set rules and norms of interaction (Orbe, 1998). For example, in some organizations women are not as free or as able as those in the dominant gender group, men, to speak up or express opinions without ridicule or condescension (Wallace & May, 2012). Women may be considered outsiders within in traditionally male dominated occupations such as law, engineering, and medicine (Wallace & May, 2012).

The notion of outsiders within is relevant to a number of marginalized populations based on having a level of cultural distinctiveness making such identities different and excluded from the in-group. Orbe (1998) theorized about the experiences of stigmatized out-group members, such as "women, people of color, people with disabilities, and gay/lesbian/bisexual [people]" (Orbe, 1998, p. 232). Additional examples of stigmatized or marginalized individuals navigating outsider within status in relation to target in-groups are first-generation college students in universities (Gist-Mackey et al., 2018), immigrant professionals in the workplace (Shenoy-Packer, 2014), older employees in the workforce (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), physical differences like disabilities (Suno, 2019), refugees who escaped civil unrest (Rowe & Paterson, 2010), and felons in job-placement programs (Conti et al., 2013).

Target Group. Target groups for outsiders within are in-groups that have power, privilege, and social status to which outsiders within contingently belong. In-groups are social groups that control the value system and seek positive distinctiveness from out-groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The dominant group is often in the majority, but not always. Examples of dominant groups in greater society are White males (Collins, 1986), the able-bodied (Keller & Galgay, 2010), cisgender people (Connell, 2010), continuing-generation college students (Ward, 2013), young professionals (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), and coworkers who are nationals in their own country (Shenoy-Packer, 2014). Each dominant in-group has been socially constructed as normative, thus granting privilege, status, and power (Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

Significant social movements, including the development of anti-discrimination laws and policies, have sought to eliminate discrimination and inequality in the social status of marginalized groups and have made the way for individuals to seek access and membership to in-groups of which they were previously denied membership. Certain laws such as the Civil Rights Act, Equal Employment Opportunity, the Women's Educational Equity Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act have resulted in out-group members' legal access to many formal in-groups. While out-group individuals are granted legal access to many in-groups, Orbe (1998) observed that many out-group members still feel as if there is little chance for social access to bona fide membership.

Often marginalized individuals' specific identity and cultural differences prohibit full organizational assimilation into a target in-group. In contrast to the ideal manifestation of the metamorphosis phase of the organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) where individuals experience growth, acceptance, increased role responsibility, and being established as an insider (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2001), the socially constructed barriers

marginalized individuals encounter may inhibit their sense of acceptance and full participation as group members; thus relegating them to a perpetual state of liminality. While outsiders within have legitimate access to operate within the group, they may lack authority from group members to individualize their organizational role, stake out territory, oblige the organization to adapt to their values, or negotiate change in their situation due to their cultural distinctiveness (Jablin, 2001; Kramer 2010). They may also lack a feeling of acceptance, trust, and value from their peers (Allen, 2011; Basford et al., 2014; Choi, 2018; Keller & Galgay, 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2004; Mik-Meyer, 2016; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Shenoy-Packer, 2014; Sonu; 2019; Ward, 2013). The lack of acceptance and full participation create social barriers to bona fide membership for outsiders within.

Experiential Examples. Outsiders within may never achieve bona fide group membership or assimilation because full access is socially constrained due to difference from in-groups. Scholars have widely documented such experiences. An example of an outsider within is documented in Connell's (2010) research regarding transgender identity. One of Connell's (2010) participants completed gender reassignment and did not feel he could identify as transgender at work. He shared his on-the-job experience as a 64-year-old transman who felt he must work stealth (undisclosed status) due to the lack of social protection at the time of his transition (Connell, 2010). The lack of perceived acceptance inhibited Connell's (2010) participant from fully disclosing his transgender identity, which created social or communicative barriers to bona fide membership.

Another example of outsiders within are first-generation college students who hesitate to tell their professors about their first-generation status for fear professors will label them with stereotypes, such as being non-assertive and low functioning (Ward, 2013). In her study, Ward

(2013) found first-generation college students believed their professors perceived them as scared and intimidated, unwilling to participate in class discussions, not willing to apply themselves to their studies, and having low intelligence. The perceived stigma created barriers for the first-generation college students to become bona fide student members.

Yet another outsider within example is found in the experience of a female program analyst documented in a study by Basford et al. (2014) about gendered microaggressions. The participant shared that she overheard a male peer talk about a project she was leading. This peer expressed doubts about her ability to lead the project. When she talked with her male supervisor about the conversation, the supervisor said she was overreacting when she countered that she believed the peers' doubts were based on gender (Basford et al., 2014). Basford et al.'s (2014) participant felt invalidated and unheard, which socially constructed a communicative barrier to her bona fide membership in the work team.

Finally, Sonu (2019) talks of her experience as a child in an elementary school classroom when her classmates approached her pulling their eyes apart and made fun of her eye shape by singing "Me Chinese, me Chinese" (p. 126). She recalled another time when her classmates laughed when someone loudly called her a racial slur. She was shocked and hurt by the strange and unwanted attention that made her feel foreign, exotic, ridiculed, mysterious, and enchanted (Sonu, 2019). These teasing and racial slurs were a communicative barrier hindering Sonu's ability to become a bona fide member of her classroom.

The cultural or distinctive character differences of outsiders within may create an atmosphere of discomfort for both in-group members and outsiders within. Members of both groups are aware of difference (Goffman, 1963). The dominant group's discomfort with difference prompts them to send the following message to outsiders within: *don't be different*.

Communication Strategies. Outsiders within often employ communication strategies in order to navigate their experience of liminality. Co-cultural theory presents a theoretical model to describe the communication approaches and desired outcomes for social interaction (Orbe, 1998) between co-cultural group members. The model incorporates a three by three matrix on two axes. Three Communication Approaches in Orbe's (1998) model are: (1) nonassertive, (2) assertive, and (3) aggressive. On the second axis the three Preferred Outcomes are: (1) separation, (2) accommodation, and (3) assimilation. The intersections of both axes result in nine communication orientations and practices employed by outsiders within (Orbe, 1998).

Individuals who employ the (a) Nonassertive Assimilation Orientation create and maintain a positive face, develop commonalities with others, engage in self-censoring, and work to avert controversy. Those who make use of the (b) Assertive Assimilation Orientation avoid acknowledging differences and engage in extensive preparation, overcompensation, manipulation of stereotypes, and in bargaining. Enacting behaviors that suspend or dissolve cultural identity, dissociating, mirroring, strategic distancing, and ridiculing self are used by those who practice the (c) Aggressive Assimilation Orientation.

Outsiders within who attempt to blend in, yet emphasize diverse standpoints, increase visibility, and seek to dispel stereotypes use the (d) Nonassertive Accommodation Orientation. Individuals who use the (e) Assertive Accommodation Orientation interact with the dominant group by communicating self, engage in intergroup networking, use liaisons, and educate others. Becoming established and committed in part of an organization, actively promoting change in dominant culture by confronting, and gaining advantage is the (f) Aggressive Accommodation Orientation.

Other stigmatized individuals chose the (g) Nonassertive Separation Orientation, which is physical distancing from the dominant group by avoiding and maintaining barriers. Having a self-assured posture by exemplifying strength, embracing stereotypes, and promoting group contributions and achievements is the (h) Assertive Separation Orientation. Last, individuals who use the (i) Aggressive Separation Orientation undermine and attack the dominant group by openly challenging and sabotaging others.

Each of the communication practices comes with benefits and costs to outsiders within. Outsiders situated within in-groups must strategically weigh what is appropriate and effective for their specific situational circumstances (Orbe, 1998). No single communication orientation is always suitable for the individual. "Using such communicative practices as disassociating, mirroring, or strategic orientation place a great importance on fitting in—the extent that others' rights and beliefs are viewed as less important in comparison" (Orbe, 1998, p. 253).

Emotional Outcomes. Scholars maintain outsiders within often experience feelings of being negatively distinctive (Appiah, 2018), ridiculed (Orbe, 1998), misunderstood (Goodman, 2014), patronized, exposed (Goffman, 1963), isolated (Orbe, 1998), disempowered (Allen, 2011), anxious, depressed (Gist & Goldstein Hode, 2017), and disingenuous (Hughey, 2012). The inability to gain bona fide membership may result in a lack of security and a diminished sense of personal agency, which is why outsiders within employ co-cultural communication to adapt to contexts dominated by majority in-groups.

Negotiating the barriers to bona fide group membership is part of the lived experience of the marginalized and stigmatized out-groups (Meisenbach, 2010; Smith, 2007). After weighing costs and benefits, outsiders within may employ the communication behaviors articulated in Orbe's (1998) co-cultural communication theory, in an attempt to navigate identity differences,

including the loss of any distinctive characteristics, to conform to dominant in-groups as much as possible. The stigmatized may choose to suppress difference by striving to become bona fide insiders (Orbe, 1998) by using the assimilation strategies. The outsider within literature theorizes how out-group members (stigmatized and marginalized individuals) behave within the context of targeted in-groups (e.g., Allen, 2011; Basford et al., 2014; Choi, 2018; Keller & Galgay, 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2004; Mik-Meyer, 2016; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Shenoy-Packer, 2014; Sonu; 2019; Ward, 2013). The opposite scenario, in-group members behaving within the context of a target out-group, has been explored under the scholarly concept: courtesy stigma. This is another type of contingent group membership.

Courtesy Stigma

Stigma is a deeply discrediting attribute that is often associated with out-group identities (Goffman, 1963). In-group or dominant group members often treat stigmatized groups differently from others, typically through discrimination, social distance, and devaluation (Smith, 2012). In-group members are typically not considered members of out-groups because the stigma identifying the out-group is not personally relevant for in-group individuals (Goffman, 1963). However, in-group individuals may choose or desire membership in a stigmatized group due to having alliances with an out-group member/group or due to changes in their social standing. Stigma may spread to in-group individuals through association with out-group members, which may result in labeling in-group individuals with the ancillary marks or stigmas of the out-group (Mehta & Farina, 1988).

Goffman (1963) conceptualized "courtesy stigma" as stigma that is extended to individuals who associate with or are supportive of individuals or groups that are stigmatized, as well as those who have experienced a change in their social standing. Other terms used for this

transference of stigma are "associative stigma" (Mehta & Farina, 1988) and "stigma by association" (Ostman & Kjellin, 2002). In-group individuals who do not personally possess a stigmatizing attribute may arouse disapproval from other dominant in-group members due to their association with out-group individuals or groups. The previously non-stigmatized person is now "obliged to share some of the discredit of the stigmatized" (Goffman, 1963, p. 30) and experience similar bullying, social rejection, and other negative treatment (Kulik et al., 2008) as those who are stigmatized (Mehta & Farina, 1988). For example, Sigelman et al. (1991) investigated courtesy stigma related to heterosexual male college students' association with gay roommates. Participants of the study who expressed strong intolerance of the gay community perceived the associate as having gay tendencies and as possessing the same stereotyped personality traits associated with gay individuals. Highly intolerant individuals attributed a courtesy stigma, inferring that heterosexual male students who apparently liked or associated with gay individuals were themselves gay (Sigelman et al., 1991).

Target Group. The target out-group for individuals with courtesy stigmas are groups or organizations that have been sociomaterially constructed (Meisenbach, 2010) to have less power, privilege, and social status by the dominant group. Examples of stigmatized groups in contemporary society are Black females (Collins, 1986), those with physical or mental disabilities (Keller & Galgay, 2010), first-generation college students (Ward, 2013), aging professionals (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), and immigrant coworkers (Shenoy-Packer, 2014).

Goffman (1963) specifically addressed in-group members he referred to as the "wise," who accept and are sympathetic to the stigmatized (Goffman, 1963; Smith, 2012). The wise are in-group members that have a unique or specific situation that makes them "intimately privy to the secret life of the stigmatized individual and sympathetic with it, and who find themselves

accorded a measure of acceptance, a measure of courtesy membership" (Goffman, 1963, p. 28).

Goffman (1963) described the process regarding social interaction where the wise become

accepted as courtesy members of stigmatized out-groups, "Before taking the standpoint of those

with a particular stigma, the normal [sic] person who is becoming wise may first have to pass

through a heart-changing personal experience…. he [sic] often must wait their validation...as a

courtesy member" (pp. 28-29). Hence, individuals with courtesy stigmas engage the standard

deprivations of stigmatized out-groups, such as anticipating and experiencing stigmatization

from others (Goffman, 1963; Pryor et al., 2012; Smith, 2007).

Individuals with courtesy stigmas are contingent group members and include, but are not

limited to, social workers who provide services or care to the stigmatized (White & Gilstrap,

2017), medical personnel who work with the ill or disabled (Harter et al., 2006), straight persons

associated with gay friends (Sigelman et al., 1991), police who interact with those who have

been convicted (Conti et al., 2013), romantic relational partners in which one member belongs to

an out-group (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2010), parents of a child that is an out-group member

(Gilead & Liberman, 2014), allies of marginalized populations (Hughey, 2012), and educators

championing felons (Conti et al., 2013) among others.

Experiential Examples. The experiences of shared stigma were expressed by volunteer

workers in Smith's (2007) study who were affiliated with people who had AIDS or HIV. The

volunteers shared the "prejudice, discounting, discrediting, and discrimination directed at people

perceived to have AIDS or HIV, their loved ones and associates, and the groups and

communities with which they are affiliated" (Herek & Capitanio, 1998, p. 232). The

stigmatization AIDS or HIV infected individuals received from others was extended to the

volunteers who worked with them. The volunteers experienced stress, psychological withdrawal,

demoralization, less satisfaction, and burnout as a result of their volunteer service with this stigmatized group (Smith, 2007).

Ostman and Kjellin (2002) researched the courtesy stigma of close relatives of individuals with severe mental illness. Their study found that courtesy stigma from having family members with mental illness is itself a cause of psychological distress and psychological burden. "Being a close relative of a person with severe mental illness creates a particularly difficult and delicate position …for they are both marker and marked" (Ostman & Kjellin, 2002, p. 494). For some relatives in the study, the effects of the shared stigma were serious enough to cause suicidal thoughts.

Individuals with a courtesy stigma are often limited in their target group membership. Full assimilation into out-groups is constrained by individuals' lack of stigmatizing attributes. In contrast to the ideal manifestation of the metamorphosis phase of the organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) where individuals experience growth, acceptance, increased role responsibility, and being established as an insider (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010), the socially-constructed barriers encountered by those with a courtesy stigma may inhibit their sense of acceptance and full participation as bona fide group members. For instance, courtesy stigma group members likely have limited influence or change within the group because they do not fully own the stigmatized social status; they are only affiliated with it. Hence, they exist in a liminal space.

While those with a courtesy stigma have access to operate within the group, they may lack authority from group members to individualize their role, stake out territory, oblige others to adapt to their values, or negotiate change in their situation due to their in-group status (Jablin, 2001; Kramer 2010). For example, in the workplace, many stigmatized groups are protected

from discrimination by government regulations or organizational policies. Courtesy stigma employees may be treated as outgroup members in the workplace, with negative impacts on career success, and psychological well-being. Yet, individuals who are stigmatized by association may have little recourse either through internal workplace grievance procedures or external legal procedures (Kulik et al., 2008). Goffman (1963, p. 131) states, that "[w]hile they are included in the group, doubts arise about their acceptance." Those lacking full membership into the stigmatized out-group will "neither have a capacity for collective action, nor a stable and embracing pattern of mutual interaction" (Goffman, 1963, p. 23). The lack of acceptance and full participation constructs barriers to bona fide membership for those with courtesy stigmas.

An example of a group with a courtesy stigma who have constraints to bona fide group membership is addressed in Hughey's (2012) study of White antiracist advocates who engaged in matters commonly deemed "non-White issues." The participants in Hughey's study (2012) were members of an organization called Whites for Racial Justice (WRJ). The group was comprised of White members whose focus was coming together to fight racism and to make personal commitments to contest racism and prejudice. The organization generated various antiracist publications and participated in community protest and awareness events. As courtesy members of a stigmatized group, the antiracists accepted in-group ostracism as an outcome of their moral commitment to social justice, racial activism, and political advocacy. Members of the group perceived the dominant White community to treat them as different, deviant, radical, and communist in nature. An antiracist participant commented, "I feel like my choices, my decisions,…my identity (are) under attack" (Hughey, 2012, p. 233). Some courtesy members expressed they were ''tired,'' ''run-down,'' ''exhausted,'' and ''drained'' from the shunning and shaming they encountered for deviating from dominant in-group expectations (Hughey, 2012, p.

233). However, the study of antiracists revealed the activities of the group were interpreted by racially stigmatized group members as being objectifying and tokenizing. Even though the antiracists engaged in burden-bearing alongside racially underrepresented community members, they encountered barriers to bona fide membership by being questioned about their motives. A participant in the study observed, "[p]eople of color think I'm crazy and wonder what my ulterior motives are," (Hughey, 2012, p. 232). Additionally, some White antiracists presented false equivalencies portraying them as targets, claiming their courtesy stigma experiences were the same as the target stigmatized group. The antiracists' "claim[s] to authenticity are often tenuous" (Hughey, 2012, p. 236). The participants experienced a sense of being watched and evaluated by both the dominant White community and stigmatized members of the racially underrepresented community (Hughey, 2012). The stigmatized community's suspicion and distrust of White antiracists was based on their perception of differences regarding race and lived experiences, which led them to construct a communicative barrier to bona fide group membership.

As Hughey (2012) demonstrates, contingent group members with courtesy stigma(s) may encounter communicative barriers to bona fide membership and identification with their target out-group, likely resulting in a diminished sense of personal agency. The stigma ownership resides with the bona fide out-group members who, in the example above, constructed barriers to bona fide membership with the out-group, which likely inhibit socialization (Kramer, 2010) and identification for individuals with courtesy stigmas. While individuals with courtesy stigma have access to operate within the out-group by way of association, allyship, or a change in social status, they lack full authority to engage in a number of activities, such as negotiating change, asserting their ideas, and claiming the stigmatized identity. Because of these barriers, courtesy

group members may feel doubtful, uneasy, self-conscious (Goffman, 1963), demoralized, distressed, burnt out, and lonely (Smith, 2007) within the context of the target out-group.

Individuals with courtesy stigmas may make out-group individuals uncomfortable in several ways. For example, in-group individuals with a courtesy stigma may be perceived to threaten out-group identity by diluting or minimizing the attributes (Lim, 2017; Morning, 2017) that categorize the out-group's social environment (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Out-group members may be uncomfortable with in-group individuals' willingness to carry a burden that is not *really* theirs to endure (Hughey, 2012; Lim, 2017; Morning, 2017). The stigmatized community may have concerns about social exploitation where in-group individuals benefit extrinsically for their efforts on behalf of the stigmatized outgroup (Keller & Galgay, 2010). For example, individuals who are motivated by money, praise, awards, recognition, and benefits may raise suspicion for the person with a stigma. In addition, stigmatized individuals may be anxious that those with a courtesy stigma may revert to in-group behaviors (Goffman, 1963). In the examples above, the discomfort experienced by stigmatized out-group members conveys a message to those with a courtesy stigma: *you haven't suffered like we have*.

Communication Strategies. Courtesy stigma members may use communication strategies to manage the experience of liminality. Meisenbach (2010) developed a typology of stigma management communication that explains possible communication strategies used to cope with and manage experiences of stigmatization. The strategies are organized by two criteria: (a) individuals' attitudes about either challenging the existence or maintaining public perception of the stigma and (b) individuals' attitudes toward the stigma's applicability to themselves. The communication strategies in Meisenbach's (2010, p. 277) typology are: (a) accepting, (b) avoiding, (c) evading responsibility, (d) reducing offensiveness, (e) denying, and

(f) ignoring/displaying. White and Gilstrap (2017) identified such discursive strategies used by hospice volunteers when negotiating their communication challenges. The hospice volunteers used "denial, reframing, redirected identification, camouflaging role experiences, and shifting focus" (p. 565) in order to alter perceptions of stigma. However, "these strategies may also exaggerate insider–outsider differences, inhibit authentic role disclosure, and reduce value of service to personal benefit" (p. 559).

The effects of courtesy stigma were further described by volunteer hospice workers who provided services and care to HIV patients with six months or less to live (White & Gilstrap, 2017). The participants in White and Gilstrap's (2017) study shared the communication strategies they used in an attempt to alter the perceptions of stigma from outsiders, as well as the challenges they encountered when trying to explain their role as hospice employees to outsiders. To better cope with the shared stigma, many of the hospice volunteers strategically shifted their stigma management communication. For example, the volunteers camouflaged or avoided sharing their authentic experiences by using euphemisms or avoiding conversations with outsiders about the joys they experienced. Another example is how the volunteers ignored discussing what could not have been done and shifted focus onto what was gained in the presence of the patients. In order to manage the prejudices of their role-based experience, the volunteers refocused their daily attention on their ability and willingness to endure the stigma related to death and dying (White & Gilstrap, 2017).

Emotional Outcomes. Scholars have established the messages some group members with a courtesy stigma are recipients of messages that communicate shaming, suspicion, and evaluation (Hughey, 2012). Some members with a courtesy stigma feel a sense of inauthenticity, others feel they are not valued (White & Gilstrap, 2017). As a result, members with a courtesy

stigma may experience stress, burnout, demoralization, psychological withdrawal, (Smith, 2007), and suicidal thoughts (Ostman & Kjellin, 2002). The inability to gain bona fide membership may result in a lack of security and a diminished sense of personal agency, which is why those with a courtesy stigma employ stigma communication to adapt to contexts dominated by minority out-groups, as well as their majority in-groups.

Individuals who are outsiders within and who have courtesy stigma(s) characterize two different types of contingent group members. Outsiders within attempt to affiliate with a target in-group, while those with courtesy stigma identify with a target out-group. Another contingent group member that has been researched by organizational communication scholars are contract workers. Scholars have found that contract workers experience a similar liminal space in regard to their socialization and identification. In the case of contract workers, the target group is a temporary employer.

Contract Workers

Contract workers' organizational assimilation and identification is another compelling example of contingent group membership because their precarious role can influence important individual outcomes, such as the psychological well-being of "real" employees (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). Globally there is a marked growth in the contract labor industry (Gossett, 2002, 2006; Kreshpaj et al., 2020; Petriglieri et al., 2018; Premji, 2017). Organizations seeking to increase flexibility and reduce costs appear to find temporary work contracts as a solution to high overhead costs and a way to increased efficiencies (Chambel et al., 2016). The environment in which companies contract with independent workers is known as the gig economy because of the contracted, non-permanent nature of engagement with individuals (Gossett, 2002, 2006; Petriglieri et al., 2018). "Contingent employment, in the form of temporary

labor, is rapidly expanding in nearly every industrial economy due, in part, to the speed with which such relationships can be formed and the related lack of long-term obligation" (Ballard & Gossett, 2007, p. 285). Contract workers may work within a regular organizational system but are unique from full-time employees because they are given a pre-established departure date or perhaps expect to exist the organization upon completion of a specific project or out-sourced task.

This non-permanent form of employment is known as contingent labor, contract work, temporary work, precarious employment, atypical employment, or nonstandard employment. (Kreshpaj et al., 2020). Examples of contract workers include temporary employees, independent contractors, interns, substitute teachers, day laborers, and seasonal workers (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; Kreshpaj et al., 2020). These labels reflect a conditional association and imply relational and communicative distance. "[T]he common use of terms like contingent to depict this part of the workforce reflects a superfluous orientation to their membership" (Ballard & Gossett, 2007, p. 280). The very nature of this work challenges the traditional model of organizational assimilation because contract workers may never reach metamorphosis with their target group, the employing organization.

Target Group. The target group for contract workers is the employing organization, which has power, privileges, and social status to which contract workers contingently belong. Contract workers are granted access to the employing organization by the hiring authority via a temporary employment contract. Often, contract workers are contracted out through an agency and have limited physical contact with their employer and limited administrative contact with the client organization (George & Chattopadhyay, 2016). Due to the contingent status of organizational membership, contract employees have been found to feel insecure, earn low

wages, experience powerlessness, and have limited rights and protections (Premji, 2017). As non-traditional employment increases, past notions of employee social identities and organizational identification are changing (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; Kreshpaj et al., 2020; Larson & Pepper, 2003).

While new permanent employees might be quickly socialized, organizations can marginalize contract employees by treating them as outsiders with limited interaction opportunities. Employers often perceive contract workers as disposable, and therefore the contract workers may not receive the organizational considerations that might be offered to permanent employees (Ballard & Gossett; 2007) prohibiting full organizational assimilation into an employing organization. In contrast to the ideal manifestation of the metamorphosis phase of the organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) where individuals experience growth, acceptance, increased role responsibility, and being established as an insider (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2001), the socially constructed barriers contract workers encounter may inhibit their sense of acceptance and full participation as bona fide group members. While contingent workers may not be physically isolated within the group environment, their interpersonal interactions are different from those of their permanent counterparts because of their short-term membership expectations. For example, contract workers are less likely than newly hired permanent employees to engage in regular interaction with organizational members, such as asking or giving information, receiving performance appraisals, and developing social support networks (Jablin, 1987, 2001).

The impermanence and fluidity of contract workers' group membership cause some to focus identity on personal productivity rather than on group membership (Petriglieri et al., 2018). While contract workers have legitimate access to operate within the group, they may lack

authority from bona fide group members to individualize their organizational role, stake out territory, oblige the organization to adapt to their values, or negotiate change in their situation due to the temporary nature of their status (Jablin, 2001; Kramer 2010). As such, contract workers struggle with significant challenges as they strive to be integrated into work groups and develop the social norms that might govern their interactions with others. The lack of acceptance and full participation construct barriers to bona fide organizational membership for contract workers.

Experiential Examples. Gossett (2002) examined contingent employment and the rationale employers used to maintain relational distance with employees. The contract workers were" kept at arm's length" as Gossett (2002) describes and operated on different relationship rules. She identified temporary employment systems that were intentionally crafted and enforced to communicatively separate permanent and temporary workers. Participants in Gossett's (2002) study revealed administrative practices where contract workers were restricted access to symbolic artifacts that defined the client environment, such as email, keys/access codes, mailbox, and name plates. The employer did not deem artifacts as cost effective or necessary for temporary staff, however this caused confusion and frustration for contract employees in longer-term assignments.

A temporal tension between present and future orientations have been identified for contract workers and their temporary employers. Ballard and Gossett (2007) researched the temporal nature of contract work and found that time for the contract worker may not be a continuous and predictable process, but as a series of disconnected periods. "What happens during the current week or season is not perceived as having much to do with what will happen during a future period" (Ballard & Gossett, 2007, p. 480). The knowledge that contract workers

may be terminated with little or no warning is a reality. Contract workers adjust to living in the present rather than making plans for futures with their employing organizations. Underscoring this present-centered focus is the reality that contract workers seldom receive feedback or performance evaluations for their work. Contingent employees sense the temporary nature of the membership within the organization. For example, Ballard and Gossett (2007) found some departmental interns felt excluded from ordinary member rituals. For example, interns felt excluded from staff parties, even after they helped to plan and execute the event. (Ballard & Gossett, 2007). The employing organization often creates a communicative barrier to bona fide membership for contract workers.

     Communication Strategies. Contract workers often employ communication strategies in order to manage the experience of liminality. Gossett (2002) noted that contract employees were not able to provide feedback or make decisions within the client organization and were denied communicative opportunities, such as suggestions and feedback. The communicative barriers perceived by the contingent employees caused them to feel as if they were not welcome to initiate communication with permanent staff or to challenge processes in any way. Rather, they felt they were to be compliant workers, doing what they were told and not to question the employer (Gossett, 2002).

     Contingent workers are generally unable to form strong attachments with either client or employer, but were not necessarily ignored, isolated, or completely alienated within the organization; they existed somewhere in the middle (Gossett, 2002) experiencing liminality. Contract workers, especially those who work onsite with the temporary employer, have opportunities to socialize and are included in day-to-day activities such as lunches, breaks, and employee meetings (Gossett, 2002). However, contract workers may have difficulty

communicating with their permanently employed co-workers and fellow temporary employees because they lack a past or an expectation of a future relationship with one other. As a communication strategy, contract workers "tend to form affective rather than instrumental friendships with one another since they do not perceive value in an instrumental friendship, but affective relationships make the environment more pleasant" (Ballard & Gossett, 2007, p. 293).

Scholars found denigrating the employing organization is a communication strategy used by contract workers (Petriglieri et al., 2018). Shifting focus from their personal loneliness and isolation, some contract staff portray the target organization as controlling, constraining, suffocating, stifling of creativity, and political (Petriglieri et al., 2018). By casting the employer as confining and limiting, the contract staff reframe their group status as a choice for freedom and independence, rather than a restriction (Petriglieri et al., 2018).

Emotional Outcomes. Petriglieri et al. (2018) found some contract workers experience anxiety in the absence of permanent organizational or professional membership. In their inductive, qualitative study of contract workers, the researchers interviewed 37 participants and asked them to define themselves and their work. The contract workers noted the lack of organizational direction and support, which caused them to identify directly with their work, rather than with the contracting organizations. Personalizing their contracted production meant that all of the contract workers' labor was identity work. "A deeper form of precariousness took the form of existential concerns about the stability of one's self-definitions and the meaning of one's work" (Petriglieri et al., 2018, p. 136). Organizational socialization shapes people's identities and emotions. Leaders, peers, and cultural scripts anchor members' identities and help buffer them from anxiety. The failure of an organization to define why, how, where, and when to work communicatively creates barriers and causes contingent group members to be anxious

(Petriglieri et al., 2018). The weakened attachment to employing organizations are problematic as it may result in emotional distress, such as lessened security, self-esteem, and legitimacy (Petriglieri et al., 2018).

Different relationship rules and complex communicative approaches limit contract workers' ability to fully identify with their organization (Chambel et al., 2016; Gossett, 2002; Petriglieri et al., 2018). Contingent membership in a group, such as contract employment in the context of the gig economy, may result in the employing organization being less salient for the purpose of self-categorization, leading to a lack of identification (George & Chattopadhyay, 2016; Gossett, 2002). The lack of permanent employment status that creates barriers to bona fide membership in the organization inhibits socialization and individualization (Kramer, 2010) for those with contract employment. While they have contractual access to operate within the group, they are not granted authority from the target organization to negotiate change in their situation (Chambel et al., 2016).

These barriers may cause contingency members to experience a lack of recognition, a sense of being taken advantage of, as well as feelings of exclusion, isolation, negativity, ambiguity, conflict, and anxiety (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; George & Chattopadhyay, 2016; Gossett, 2002). Contract workers often encounter communicative barriers to bona fide membership and identification, which typically results in a lack of job security and a diminished sense of personal agency. Contentions of illegitimacy result in shutting down inspiration, initiative, and opinion (Gossett, 2002) and create a message from the employer to the contract worker: *you're not really one of us*.

Outsiders within, those with a courtesy stigma, and contract workers all receive messages from their target groups that create barriers to bona fide membership in the organization and

inhibit socialization (Kramer, 2010) and identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). See Table 1 for a concise summary and comparison of the contingent group membership types.

Table 1

Summary of Contingent Group Membership Types

Contingent Membership Group	Outsider Within	Courtesy Stigma	Contract Worker
Target Group	In-group	Out-group	Organization or Business
Permission Granted	In-Group Member(s)	Out-Group Member(s)	Hiring Authority
Rules of Access	May participate as non-distinct member to greater or lesser degree	May suffer some deprivations of stigmatized group	May be involved in limited day-to-day occupational activities
Message Sent from Target Group	*Don't try to be different.*	*You haven't suffered like we have.*	*You're not really one of us.*

While contingent group members have legitimate access to operate within a group, the communicative barriers constrain them from bona fide group membership. Contingent group members are in a liminal space, inhibiting their ability to fully identify with and be assimilated into their respective target groups. Outsiders within, those with a courtesy stigma, and contract workers, all as contingent group members, may feel doubtful, uneasy, self-conscious (Goffman, 1963), demoralized, distressed, burnt out, lonely (Smith, 2007), and experience a lack of acceptance, trust, and value from their peers (Allen, 2011; Basford et al., 2014; Choi, 2018; Keller & Galgay, 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2004; Mik-Meyer, 2016; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Shenoy-Packer, 2014; Sonu; 2019; Ward, 2013). These communicative barriers may threaten contingent group members' sense of personal dignity and worth.

Dignity Injuries

Group membership is a social relationship that holds promise for contributing positively to one's identity, self-esteem, and flourishing (Ashforth & Male, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Dignity is important to contingent group members, as most people possess a strong desire to derive a sense of self☐worth from their membership and to be treated respectfully (Hecht et al., 2005). On the other hand, a sense of belonging can be destroyed when one feels dehumanized, disrespected, or disposable.

Dignity is the feeling, experience, perception, or realization individuals have when they sense they are worthy, honored, or respected as a person (Lucas, 2015). Dignity is extended to others through respectful and affirming verbal and nonverbal communication. Lucas (2015) describes three types of dignity: inherent, earned, and remediated. Inherent dignity is the dignity one receives by virtue of being human. Earned dignity is based on individuals' contributions to the organization; it is recognized by messages about one's merit, competence, and/or contribution. Remediated dignity is the communicative concealing of inequality or instrumentality that obscures the way work is harmful and exploitative. Remediated dignity is an "other-dependent" form of dignity because it is recognized through respectful social interactions that conceal dignity injuries (Lucas, 2015).

Dignity injuries are often experienced by contingent group members as a result of stigmatization, marginalization, negative micro-level interactions, and organizational isolation. Target group members intentionally and unintentionally isolate contingent group members (Sias, 2009). Examples of isolating behavior are careful and deliberate editing of communication, communicating only when necessary, shunning or ignoring, refusing to communicate, and encouraging other group members to cut off communication (Sias, 2009). The denial of

communicative opportunities likely hinders the identification process. Participation in decision-making and opportunities for feedback have been found to foster identification among organizational members (Petriglieri et al., 2018). One of the most serious consequences of being left out of organizational communication is being uninformed (Sias, 2009). Threats to belongingness, esteem, meaningful existence, and a lack of control (Sias, 2009) are the primary consequences of isolation. Contingent group members often experience these emotions due to their liminal status and contingent belonging to their respective target groups. This sense of isolation contributes to a sense of insecurity and lack of agency in the experience of the contingent group members.

Contingent group members have a sense of being second-rate citizens when they are denied dignified treatment. For example, when contract workers are treated callously or insensitively in the organizational relationship or when an organization exploits expendability, (Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Lucas, 2015). Shenoy-Packer (2015) suggests, "marginalized groups continually feel their experiential reality invalidated, insulted at a personal or group level, and constantly reminded of their inferior social status as members of devalued groups" (p. 259). Messages that signal *don't be different*, *you haven't suffered like we have*, or *you are not really one of us* are communicative barriers contingent group members have encountered. These communicative barriers in the organizational assimilation process threaten contingent group members' sense of dignity and may erode positive self-concepts through disrespectful social interaction. Such marginalization negatively affects contingent group members' power and influence within the target group.

Contingent Groups within Higher Education

In order to explore the various types of contingent group membership, this study was situated in institutions of higher education. Higher education is a sector which is highly institutionalized. Institutions are enduring and fixed in character, they have power over matters of policy, and influence social arrangements (Lammers & Barbour, 2006). Universities are often portrayed as, and have been found to be, quite stable organizational forms of institutions (Stensaker, 2015) because they are hierarchically structured, most communication is prescriptive, formalized, written, and archived (Lammers & Barbour, 2006), and they are resistant to radical change (Ford & Ford, 1995; Stensaker, 2015).

Colleges and universities are similar to many other organizations in that they have employees, clients, stakeholders, vendors, cultures, goals, administrative hierarchies, and so forth. The study of contingent group membership is relevant to higher education because of the distinctive combination of goals, tasks, employees, governance structures, values, technologies, and history. Thus, the communicative processes of assimilation and identification are continually occurring in the higher education context. Further, all three types of contingent group members are present within institutions of higher education.

The culture of higher education is relevant to this study. Administrating faculty at universities and colleges is becoming more complex. Campuses employ tenured, tenure-track and nontenure-track, part- and full-time, and unionized and nonunionized faculty members. The number of tenure system positions has declined, and nontenure track faculty numbers have grown, resulting in associated losses in job security and employment continuity (Alleman et al., 2017). Creative job titles and contracts create high levels of differentiation and fragmentation, as well as multiple layers of bureaucratic challenges (Kezar & Holcombe, 2015). Faculty and staff roles within higher education often become the basis for ranking systems (Young et al., 2015).

These systems give deference to academic tenure status and years of service, resulting in "othering" and stigmatizing of low-ranking organizational members. The complexities of higher education make the study of contingent group membership relevant and essential.

This research project examines the experiences of each type of contingent group membership (e.g., outsiders within, courtesy stigmas, and contract workers) situated in a university setting. The contingent groups are represented by international students, ADA university staff who support students with disabilities, and adjunct professors. By contextualizing research to explore the contingent group member experience within a single situated context, I seek to contribute to our understanding of contingent group membership as it relates to organizational assimilation, as well as identity and identification scholarship. Each group is reviewed below.

Contingent Group Members: International Students as Outsiders Within

International students enrolling in U.S. colleges and universities enrich campuses across the country. In the 2018/2019 school year, over a million students came from all parts of the planet to study in the U. S. from China, India, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Brazil, Nigeria, Greece, and many, many more (Institute of Higher Education, 2020). These students come to study in the United States for a host of reasons. For some their home environments have "restricted economic resources, fewer world-class institutions, low degree of involvement in the world community, fewer doctoral and postdoctoral programs, lack of availability of specializations, limited access to funding, poor career prospects, and adverse social or political conditions" (Rabia, 2016, p. 132). For others, higher education in the U. S. means gaining the prestige of a foreign degree, access to more advanced academic and technological facilities, opportunities for financial support, creating international social links and personal

recommendations, gaining experiences in diverse cultures, increased opportunities for employment, and higher earning potential (Rabia, 2016). However, there are challenges to being an international student that are related to their outsider within status.

Domestic students may perceive international students in positive ways, such as being highly intelligent, hard-working, and adventurous. Domestic students may also view their international peers in negative ways, such as socially and culturally maladjusted, unsociable, different, and having poor language skills (Zhou & Zang, 2014). Some may even see international students as a source of competition and threat (Suspitsyna, 2013). While most domestic students consider international students favorably, many are not interested in initiating contact with their international student counterparts (Zhou & Zang, 2014). Professors may also have the perception that, due to cultural and language barriers, international students slow down the class and academic discussions are of a lower quality, and the international students lack the motivation, confidence, or skills to fully participate in the classroom (Rabie, 2016). These positive and negative perceptions may set international students apart from their host university student body; international students are outsiders within.

Socialization is important to international students' degree completion and institutional commitment (Rabia, 2016). Social integration and becoming a bona fide student member "are determined by factors such as informal peer group association, interaction with academics and staff, and semi-formal extracurricular activities" (Zhou & Zang, 2014, p. 4). Cultural differences affect relationships between teachers and students and also among students. For this reason, establishing a positive relationship with faculty may be more important for international students than it is for domestic students as professors are sources of academic, emotional, and personal support (Suspitsyna, 2013). However, a significant number of international students never

contact their instructors for assistance; further, most rarely participate in organized student events (Zhou & Zang, 2014). This is due in part to the communicative barriers of language proficiency, cultural differences, and host university intolerance.

English language proficiency and confidence influence many facets of international students' lives, including understanding course materials, finding group-work partners, and making friends (Zhou & Zang, 2014). International students in the U.S. whose first language is not English have been found to encounter challenges with making close friends with domestic students. This is because the cultural bonds with friends from their home countries and other international students were stronger due to the common experience of missing their home countries and trying to fit in with the host student body (Rabia, 2016).

Different educational values affect the relationship between teachers and international students, as well as between international students and domestic students. Many international students come from cultures that emphasize theoretical knowledge and the most important factor for evaluation is the final exam. The students are not only challenged with knowledge application, but also with the learning process when studying in a U.S. university (Rabia, 2016).

Another cultural disconnect for international students may be a co-existence of American students' espousal of diversity as a value that co-exists with the tension of an intolerance of foreign accents and cultural difference (Suspitsyna, 2013). "[D]iversity is a prominent descriptor of the host campus, but it is seldom understood as a counter-weight to intolerance, which is often explained as xenophobia and racism" (Suspitsyna, 2013, p. 1359). In an attempt to help international students socially integrate, international students have been encouraged by advisors and domestic peers to act like American students, to Americanize their language, and abandon orientation to their home countries (Suspitsyna, 2013), implying they should assimilate.

International students face unique challenges to socially integrate within the context of their host institution due to differences in attitudes, cultures, and learning habits compared with their domestic counterparts, as well as challenges with English language competency and confidence, a hesitancy to connect with professors and domestic peers (Rabia, 2016), and encounters with a paradoxical coexistence of intolerance and diversity (Suspitsyan, 2013). These cultural differences, language difficulties, isolation, and stigma can act as barriers to social integration and student member socialization (Rabia, 2016; Suspitsyan, 2013; Zhou & Zang, 2014). Such experiences foster a liminal space for international students as outsiders within. Research about international students suggests that they have consistently higher anxiety and sense of a loss of control than their domestic counterparts (Rabia, 2016; Suspitsyan, 2013; Zhou & Zang, 2014). These negative emotional outcomes are due in part to not being able to fully identify as student members, as well as encountering communicative barriers in the socialization process that prohibit them from becoming bona fide group members in U.S. universities. The sense of belonging to a U.S. institution of higher education and feeling confident in one's standing as a group member is an important element that many international students are often denied.

Contingent Group Members ADA university staff as Courtesy Stigma

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended," n.d.) universities are mandated to arrange reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a documented disability to ensure equal access to all college-sponsored activities on and off campus, including internships ("Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended," n.d.; Rochette & Loiselle, 2012.). The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that lasts longer than

six months and substantially limits one or more major life activity, including learning, eating,

sleeping, seeing, hearing, walking, standing, communicating, or concentrating ("Americans with

disabilities act of 1990, as amended," n.d.). Examples of disability conditions are neurological

and musculoskeletal disorders, sense organ impairment, skin and endocrine conditions, loss of

mobility, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder,

and food or environmental allergies ("Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended,"

n.d.; Rochette & Loiselle, 2012). Most universities employ full-time staff to support the needs of

students with disabilities. ADA university staff are tasked with working collaboratively with

partners across campuses to ensure that all aspects of the campus experience are inclusive for

students with disabilities.

The process of obtaining reasonable accommodation begins with student disclosure of a

disability. University students have the responsibility of providing appropriate documentation

from a qualified physician or clinician who has diagnosed their disabilities. ADA university staff

coordinate with faculty to collaboratively accommodate academic support of students with

disabilities (Rochette & Loiselle, 2012).

ADA university staff facilitate a host of accommodations that range from modifying

policies, practices, or procedures to providing auxiliary aids and services (Rochette & Loiselle,

2012). ADA university staff coordinate arrangements with professors and the larger campus

community, which might include, but are not limited to, scheduling classes to an accessible

location, using early enrollment options for students with disabilities to allow time to arrange

accommodations, allowing service animals in the classroom, allowing students to use note takers

or record lectures, allowing students with disabilities, whose disability prevents them from taking

a full-time course load, to qualify for financial aid (Barger, 2016). Professors have some

flexibility with the accommodation plans ADA university staff arrange for student accommodation (Barger, 2016). For example, if additional time for a test is necessary, the professor might have the student take the test at the disabilities services office or the professor could stay in the classroom with the student.

Students with disabilities may be subjected to stigmatization due to developmental, emotional, physical and/or psychiatric differences. When bias against individuals with disabilities is manifest, it often results in ableism, which is defined as the "overarching act of prejudice and/or discrimination against disabled people and the devaluation of disability and corresponds with able-bodied/neurotypical privilege, the set of unearned privileges held by nondisabled individuals" (Kattari et al., 2018, p. 477). Ableism is a social prejudice and set of discriminatory beliefs that revoke dignity from individuals, especially when enacted by able-bodied organizational others in the form of derogatory language, dismissive attitudes, and directed slights (Baldridge & Kulkarni, 2017; Keller & Galgay, 2010; McLaughlin et al., 2004; Mik-Meyer, 2016). Although students with disabilities are provided various academic accommodations and are protected under federal law, occurrences of stigma and discrimination on the part of faculty and able-bodied peers has been well documented (Baker et al., 2012; Bettencourt et al., 2018; Rillotta et al., 2018; Rochette & Loiselle, 2012). Professors may have lower expectations for success of their students with disabilities and perceive these students as a liability to their chosen academic major (Bettencourt et al., 2018). Professors may be hesitant to offer extra credit, alternative assignments, or lecture notes due to perceptions that students with disabilities are lazy, unmotivated, lacking effort, or are attempting to beat the system (May & Stone, 2014).

According to Barger (2016), ADA university staff who provide services, advocacy, or care to the stigmatized, are "committed to creating an accessible learning community where individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue their educational goals, limited only by their abilities, not their disabilities" (Barger, 2016, n.p.). Goffman's (1963) concept of "courtesy stigma" explains how the stigma of students with disabilities extends to the ADA university staff who associate with or are supportive of these students. By definition, ADA university staff are contingent group members via courtesy stigma.

Young et al. (2015) coined the term "hierarchical microaggression" to represent the everyday slights found in higher education often experienced by university staff that communicate systemic valuing (or devaluing) of a person based on the institutional role held by that person in the institution. Micro-aggressions (Sue et al., 2007) are categorized as micro-assaults (derogatory comments and actions), micro-insults (invectives specific to identity or background), and micro-invalidation (invalidating or discrediting the experience of the stigmatized with regard to discrimination). Micro-aggressions are a form of stigmatizing communication that subtly tears at individuals' identity and dignity. As a group sharing the stigma of the clients they support, the ADA university staff may experience courtesy stigma because they support a stigmatized student group (Smith, 2007), those with disabilities.

While ADA university staff have access to operate within the target group by way of association and allyship, they may lack full authority to assert their ideas within the stigmatized student body, personally claiming the stigmatized identity, and so forth. The body of research on the lived experience of those who have a courtesy stigma (Harter et al., 2006; Kulik et al., 2008; Mehta & Farina, 1988; Ostman & Kjellin, 2002; Sigelman et al., 1991; Smith, 2007) suggests

that ADA university staff may have consistently higher anxiety and a higher sense of loss of control than their university counterparts who support students without disabilities.

Contingent Group Members: Adjunct Professors as Contract Workers

Adjunct professors are defined as professors who are non-tenure track contingent labor, usually part-time and non-salaried employees of a college or university (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Adjunct professors are hired by schools on a contractual, part-time basis as opposed to the traditional university model of full-time employment. As contract faculty, they teach many of the same courses tenure track professors do. Adjunct professors are not assigned the full range of duties permanent faculty perform. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this employment status.

Many adjunct professors express an appreciation for the workplace and work hour flexibility that contractual employment can offer. Others enjoy the advantages of the choice to focus on teaching and curriculum rather than research or service to their department or institution. Many enjoy an affiliation with a collegial and intellectual environment, as well as the opportunity to positively impact students (Concordia University-Portland, 2019). Many adjunct professors teach courses as an extension of their professional or corporate careers.

Yet, there are challenges to being a contract employee. Adjunct professors are paid considerably less than permanent professors and, as part-time or temporary employees, often are not extended financial benefits such as health care, retirement, and promotional opportunities. A significant challenge for adjunct professors is the precarity of one- to three-year employment contracts. Additionally, there may be the same amount of non-classroom hours as tenure-track professors, without equal pay. Adjuncts may not have a designated office space, computers, or other technology provided. Because of their liminal status, many adjunct professors are not

allowed to participate in student selection or hiring decisions, and most cannot make independent decisions regarding curriculum and research. For example, during departmental meetings, tenure track faculty staff may sit at the table, and non-tenure track faculty may be relegated to sit around the room (Mapes, 2019). Adjunct faculty are given fewer opportunities for training and upward mobility (Concordia University-Portland, 2019), as well as fewer resources to do their work and less institutional support overall. Even though teaching is the focus of the adjunct professor's work, they typically are not eligible to be nominated for teaching awards and cannot apply for teaching or research grants (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). Furthermore, tenured faculty may negatively label adjunct employment status (Mapes, 2019).

Most adjunct professors accept non-tenure track contracts knowing the terms of their employment (Brennan & Magness, 2018). There are various reasons why individuals take adjunct positions. Many are young professionals and accept this type of appointment right out of school in anticipation of a permanent appointment (Concordia University-Portland, 2019). What little research has been conducted on the contingent status of adjunct professors suggests that they have consistently higher anxiety and a higher sense of loss of control than their full-time, permanent counterparts (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). These negative emotional outcomes are due in part to not being able to fully form an identity as a professors, as well as encountering communicative barriers in the socialization process that prohibit them from becoming bona fide organizational group members. The sense of belonging to a group and feeling confident in one's standing as a group member is an important element that many adjunct professors are denied.

Research Questions

Contingent group members have limited power and restricted authority under the provisions of the target group's conditional inclusion (Collins, 1999; Goffman, 1963; Gossett,

2002). Due to communicative boundaries or constraints, these group members are often isolated and relegated to a contingent or liminal affiliation within their respective target group (Lau & Murnighan, 2005). As a result, many experience an overwhelming perception of a lack of personal power (Allen, 2011; Collins, 1999; Goffman, 1963; Gossett, 2002) making identity work taxing and less effective (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008).

There are few communication studies that focus on the common phenomenological experiences across these three types of contingent group membership. The aim of this research is to identify the common experience of organizational members who are contained in the liminal space of contingent group membership. Specifically, the project will explore the communicative barriers contingent group members encounter in the organizational assimilation process and the messages they receive from their respective target groups. To better understand the experience of international students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors as contingent group members, the following research questions guide this study:

RQ1: How do contingent group members experience a sense of belonging to their target group?

RQ2: What messages do contingent group members receive from their target group about their status?

RQ3: How do contingent group members experience their liminal status?

RQ4: How do contingent group members use communication to navigate their liminal status?

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

The interpretivist paradigm informed the methodology for this project. In interpretivist research there is an ethical commitment to maintain fidelity to the life world and a desire to emphasize the contributions of human subjectivity (Crotty, 1998). The findings of interpretivist research investigation are contextually bound because they are specific to a particular context, situation, and time. Interpretive findings are open to re-interpretation and negotiation through dialogue. What is taken to be valid or true is negotiated, and this research recognized multiple, valid claims to knowledge. If necessary for the research, differing interpretations may be explored.

For this project, I employed a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological analysis facilitates understanding of how the everyday, intersubjective world is constituted in relation to a specific phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Phenomenology is an intersection of consciousness, the lived experience, and the phenomenon of interest (Zahavi, 2005). It is "the study of the ways in which it appears to us" (van Manen, 1990, p. 185). This method of inquiry askes "What is it like?" or "What is this experience like?" (van Manen, 2017). This methodology relies on data as "phenomenological examples" in contrast to other methods that are dependent on numerical, coded, or objectifying data (van Manen, 2017). Phenomenological examples are the recollection or reflection of a phenomena that are vivid and detailed and describe exactly what is given. Thus, the aim of phenomenology is to retrospectively bring awareness to some lived experience by reflecting on the meaning of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2017). A challenge of using this method of inquiry is recovering the lived experience without objectifying the meanings or "turning the lived meanings into positivistic themes, sanitized concepts, objectified descriptions, or abstract theories" (van Manen, 2017, p. 813). In this case, the phenomenon of interest is

contingent group membership. This research intended to genuinely understand the perspectives and lived experiences of participants, resulting in an explanation and enhanced understanding. (van Manen, 1990).

Participants and Recruitment

The data for this project were collected through online journals and photo elicitation. Efforts were made to recruit a diverse sample across the three different types of contingent group members identified in Chapter 2.

Recruitment

International student participants were recruited from on-campus international student organizations and an invitational email. A flier was included in email messages to possible participants (see Appendix A: Recruitment Fliers). ADA university staff participants were directly recruited from campus access and accommodation offices by an invitational email. Recruitment of adjunct professors was conducted by an invitational email. A snowball recruitment strategy was used to connect with participants at multiple university and college locations. Each potential participant respondent received an email informing them about the study and inviting them to confirm their eligibility to participate. Thirty participants received $40 gift cards in gratitude for their participation in the project. Two participants refused the gift card because they chose not to disclose confidential, personal information. One participant failed to provide the required information to receive the gift card after multiple attempts; a card was not issued for this participant.

Participants

The 33 participants in this study included 12 international students, 10 ADA university staff, and 11 adjunct professors. All participants were required to be 18 years or older. All

international students as outsiders within participants were enrolled as graduate students in a college or university in the United States at the time of the study. All ADA university staff were employed as part- or full-time staff at a college or university in the United States at the time of the study. The ADA university staff participants did not have a history of a documented disability in order to ensure they qualified as individuals with a courtesy stigma. All adjunct professors who participated had no longer than a 1-year employment contract as an adjunct professor in a college or university in the United States at the time of the study. See Table 2 for

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Participants

	Int'l Grad Students	ADA Univ Staff	Adjunct Professors
Sex			
Female	6	9	9
Male	6	1	2
Race			
Asian	10	0	1
Black	1	0	0
Caucasian	2	10	10
Age			
18-23	3	0	0
24-30	6	2	1
31-40	3	1	6
41-50	0	4	3
51-60	0	2	1
61-70	0	1	0
Educational Level			
Bachelor's	0	4	0
Master's	9	6	5
Doctorate	2	0	6
University Type and Region			
Midwest Research	10	3	7
Midwest Community College	0	0	3
Midwest Private	1	1	0
Northwest Private	0	3	1
Northern Private	0	1	0
South Research	0	0	1
Southern Private	0	1	0

demographic details of the full sample. To avoid any conflict of interest, none of the participants were Communication Studies affiliates.

According to Neuman (2011), research participants have a right to have their privacy considered and protected. The journal and photo methods allowed for electronic consent, as well as confidential participation in the process. An information statement solicited consent prior to the journal study process. All participants were assigned pseudonyms common to their country of origin. Participants were informed they may leave the research process at any time without penalty. All participants in the research process were 18 years of age or older. Because of these protections, there was minimal possible risk or potential for harm. One participant began the study and opted out of the project. All other participants began and completed all journal entries.

The introductory instructions, consent forms, demographic survey, and journal prompts were delivered to participants in written form via Qualtrics, a web-based software survey platform used to gather research data. The program is encrypted and housed in a central location, which helps to ensure confidentiality of participants' personal information, as well as the content of the journal responses. Qualtrics programming options provides for branching logic, email automation, audio-visual stimuli, timing, and numerous question formats.

Participants accessed the program by a link provided in an introductory email. A series of emails were automatically used to provide links to the respondents on subsequent days. Once the participants submitted their first response, a program was created to send an email with a link back to their original submission that was used on the subsequent day. Participants were able to view previous responses; however, they were not able to work ahead. The journal responses stand alone in that they are independent one from the other. This allowed for open coding across all participants for specific journal days.

Data Collection

To conduct a rigorous study, this project took a crystallized approach to data collection by employing journaling and photo elicitation (see Appendix B: Study Protocol). Crystallization is a research method of "gathering multiple types of data" (Tracy, 2010, p. 884). The process depends upon "segmenting, weaving, blending, or otherwise drawing upon two or more genres or ways of expressing findings" (Ellingson, 2014, p. 445). By using multiple types and sources of data, combining multiple and divergent forms of collection, and employing different theoretical frames, the researcher can investigate a subject multi-dimensionally with each dimension informing the other (Ellingson, 2014; Tracy, 2013). By using the metaphor of a crystal one imagines the influences such as context, history, and identity as forming the lived experiences of the participants. Each experience is formed and informed by both external and internal forces (Tracy, 2013). By taking this approach to research, one brings richness to studying a phenomenon that a single focus cannot (Ellingson, 2014). The goal of crystallization is to open up a more complex, in-depth, and insightful understanding of an issue. The theoretical frames of assimilation and identification were used for this study.

In qualitative phenomenological research, the researcher seeks to understand the lives, experiences, and motivations of other people (Crotty, 1998; Van Manen, 1990, 2017). Journaling as a data collection method was used in this project. Participants in this study provided written reports about events and experiences of their daily lives. These reports captured the particulars of a lived experience in a way that is not possible using many traditional research methods, such as surveys and/or structured interviews (Bolger et al., 2003). The events and experiences this study asked participants to share may have been stressful, emotional, and/or confusing. Journaling uses writing as a way to record, process, and make sense of personal experiences, as well as a means

to reflect on one's feelings from a situation or conversation (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016). Writing as a means of sharing with others may enable individuals to process events on an intellectual or cerebral level, rather than reliving experiences as layers of feelings (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016). This is demonstrated by Pennebaker's (1997) research on writing about traumatic events (e.g., see also Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Pennebaker et al., 1990).

The cognitive, affective, and behavioral benefits of journaling is a rationale for engaging this method of data collection. Pennebaker and his colleagues have utilized journaling as a vehicle to collect quantitative and qualitative data in hundreds of studies on the benefits of writing about traumatic or highly-distressing events (e.g., Kunkel et al., 2014; Pennebaker, 1997; Pennebaker et al., 2003; Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016; Smyth & Pennebaker, 1999). Pennebaker's emotionally expressive paradigm of research has participants focus their writing about the same emotionally-distressing topic for a series of consecutive days. In countless studies, Pennebaker and his colleagues have observed that, due to intensive and emotion-filled writing, individuals begin to make better sense of their experiences (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016). Pennebaker used journaling as a therapeutic intervention for trauma. The data collected measured the effectiveness of the writing exercises.

Similar to Pennebaker's research, for my dissertation study, journaling prompts were used as a means to allow the participants to recall and express emotional states, as well as to cognitively connect their experiences to interactions with others, events that occurred, and/or draw conclusions. Another rationale for using journaling to collect data on participants' lived experiences is the use of natural language. Pennebaker et al. (2003) observed individuals tend to adjust their communicative behaviors to one another in an attempt to gain social approval or out of a sense of efficiency. Recalling and retelling events in writing facilitates natural

language use. Journaling helps participants to avoid self-consciousness that often occurs in interviews and other face-to-face forms of data collection, such as changes in language, forms of address, politeness, and hedge words (Pennebaker et al., 2003). Unlike Pennebaker's work that prompts participants to write about the same distressing experience for a number of days, I opted to shift Pennebaker's methods in order to have participants write about a series of distinct prompts.

Journal studies often require detailed instructions to ensure that participants fully understand the protocol (Bolger, 2003). An introduction message included a greeting from me, the primary investigator, as well as an introduction to the journaling process, expectations of the participants' writing, terms of the research study, and the option to opt out of the project (see Appendix C: Introduction to the Project, Appendix D: Consent Form, and Appendix E: Demographic Survey). The journal study made use of writing prompts (see Appendix H: Journal Prompts) intended to encourage the participants to explore their experiences as contingent group members by way of minimally structured writing exercises. This method created detailed, commonplace, and reliable data that has been found to generate in-depth and nuanced responses (Bolger et al., 2003). Collecting data using the journal method allowed the participants more autonomy to share what they wanted, as well as where and when they wanted.

The first journal prompt was intended to gain insight as to why and how the participants as contingent group members sought membership with their target social group. This was done by way of asking them to tell their story with turning points. The initial journal prompt asked, "Tell me the story about how you became an international graduate student/ADA university staff/adjunct professor. Please include the moments in your life that led you to become an international graduate student/ADA university staff/adjunct professor who studies/works at your

university in the U. S." Writing one's story may be empowering, as well as a means for developing self-awareness (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016). Storytelling was used because it situated the participant subjectively in the process by relaying events and transitions that are meaningful to them (Richter et al., 2019). Their story also provided a context for facts that are significant and have personal implications. A story was a vehicle to gather personal and internal perspectives of the participants, as well as for the researcher (Richter et al., 2019).

The journal prompt for the second day was, "What are the advantages and disadvantages of your role as an international graduate student/ADA university staff/adjunct professor? Please describe specific incidents that illustrate the advantages and disadvantages." This journal entry was intended to identify both the privileges and limitations extended to the contingent group members by their respective target group.

On the third day, participants were asked to use a metaphor to describe their experience as a contingent group member. Metaphors emerge in everyday talk and guide thinking and acting and are a means of expressing subconscious or difficult aspects of an experience, situation, or oneself (Marshak, 1996: Tracy et al., 2006). Metaphors fundamentally guide how people experience their world (Tracy et al., 2006). The everyday language of metaphors makes stories and concepts relatable.

The third prompt also asked participants to take three to six photos that literally or symbolically illustrate the metaphor they used to describe their contingent group experience (see Appendix H, Photo Release). Photos facilitated a different kind of communication within the data collection context (Wilhoit, 2017). Photos can document people, places, and things, as well as evoke all manner of feelings (Padgett, 2008) and create a sense of empathy for the work (Patton, 2015). Respondent-driven photo elicitation can spark creativity, moving respondents

from solely textual information to considering the visual and the material (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Tracy, 2013; Wilhoit, 2017). This method entwines thought with the act of seeing, to help capture the sensory, visceral, and cognitive experience (Wilhoit, 2017). Photos are a way of knowing what is different from written responses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). With this data collection method, I was able to literally see the participant experience. The participants were asked to caption and describe each photo. Collected photos were deidentified to protect participant privacy.

In the fourth prompt participants were asked to discuss the contingent nature of their group participation based on their membership status. The prompt asked participants to "talk about ways you believe you might contribute to your student group/students with disabilities/department/university, but because of your group status, you cannot or are not allowed to contribute. Please include a specific incident(s) that illustrates this experience." This journal entry was intended to explore the liminal space experienced by contingent group members.

On the fifth day, participants were asked to share another story. This time the story was about being shunned, dismissed, ignored, or insulted in their role. If they have not experienced this, they were asked to recall a time they were reminded of their status as an international student/ADA university staff/adjunct professor. The story format was once again used to recall an event, however in this instance, it was used to tell of a possible painful occurrence (Pennebaker & Smyth, 2016) where participants experienced a communicative barrier in their contingent status from their target group. The stories revealed both verbal and nonverbal messages that prohibit bona fide group membership.

In contrast to the story in the fifth journal exercise, on the sixth day participants were asked to describe the ideal target group experience. The writing prompt asked participants to describe what a positive experience looks and feels like, and what it might be like to participate in their target group in an ideal situation. This response revealed the similarities and differences from the lived contingent group experience and the idealized target group experience for the international students/ADA university staff/adjunct professors.

Finally, the daily journal prompts ended with a question to discuss how the participants experience support and community on their campus. On this seventh day of writing, the participants may or may not describe a sense of isolation and lack of connection within the target group. The responses helped to describe the emotional outcomes of the contingent group experience.

Pilot testing of the Qualtrics programming and the journal process was conducted. Six participants, two from each group, volunteered to complete the seven-day process and provide feedback for revision to the procedures, prompts, and the programming. The participants gave feedback that the instructions were fairly easy to follow. Two participants were challenged with the picture collection because they were connected to the metaphor, and they had little time to prepare images ahead of time. This was discussed with my advisor, and we determined to continue with the collection as directed.

Another piece of feedback was about the requirement of 500 or more words per journal submission. The participant shared they had difficulty meeting that number on a couple of days. There was a question from one of my committee members about this requirement as well. In consultation with my advisor, we discussed giving a range with a lesser word count. We agreed that giving an option for fewer words may result in an even lighter response. It was hoped that if

the participants could not push to 500 words on a topic they might continue with something else they found important. The participants unanimously agreed the journal prompts were interesting, thought provoking, and were in a sequence that build upon one another. None felt uncomfortable disclosing their experiences.

There were technical issues with the Qualtrics programming logic. Specifically, the calendar function for returning to the survey did not work well for the participants. That was troublesome, as the Qualtrics programmer did not have an easy resolution. Fortunately, he willingly spent many hours creating and testing coding to correct the issue. Another technical issue was on the users' end. Many waited for several days for the email link to come to their email. Unfortunately, several had the email directed to spam or junk mail. The delay in responding to subsequent journal prompts resulted in data being saved over older data. Resolving this was an additional programming challenge.

The study commenced once the programming and user errors were addressed. Additional programming challenges with survey flow, display logic, and embedded data became evident. The programming was extremely complex. The program was not challenging to the participants, rather it was very difficult to use when extracting the data. Almost half of the photos were not retrievable. I contacted the individual participants and requested email submission of the photos they used for the project. In the end, approximately one-third of the photo were not available.

The journal study resulted in 242 pages of data; 84 pages for the international graduate students, 82 pages for the ADA university staff, and 76 for the adjunct professors. The photo collection resulted in 101 images, 67 of which were retrievable; 26 images for the international graduate students, 17 for the ADA university staff (2 participants did not submit photos, 1 submitted one photo), and 24 for the adjunct professors.

Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis software, NVivo, was used to manage and analyze the journal and photo data. Analysis of the journal data included data management, reduction, and an iterative approach to analysis. Review consultation occurred throughout each coding cycle. I successfully hired and supervised a student research assistant to support the project with the first round of coding, as well as assist with organizing participant information. The student was not a student in the courses I was teaching during the time of their hire. Funding for the student compensation was provided by a grant from the Doctoral Student Research Fund granted by KU's Office of Graduate Studies and an award of funds from the Stereotyping and Intergroup Processes in Communication Research Fund from KU's Communication Studies program. I trained the student assistant for the project, including the first cycle of coding using NVivo.

The first cycle of coding focused on "what" is present in the data (Tracy, 2010). For this initial cycle I used open coding to organize the raw data which consisted of reading the journals line by line. NVivo, a data analysis tool, was used to identify and classify portions of the text with descriptive labels (Saldana, 2009). The assistant and I scanned the primary data for words and phrases most commonly used by respondents, as well as words and phrases used with emotions. Analysis of the photos was conducted along with the journals (Saldana, 2009). The images were analyzed as symbols that were interpreted in relation to the participants' responses. The research assistant maintained a code book including notations that explained how various clustered codes developed into categories and subsequent themes. We met frequently to debrief during the data analysis.

After first-cycle coding, I ceased the use of a student research assistant and personally reduced the data and eliminated the codes that were not prevalent across the data set, nor salient

to the research purpose. Next using second cycle coding (Tracy, 2013), I interconnected and linked the words and phrases from the initial review of the data. The process asked, "what are the connections among the codes?" This phase of the analysis process synthesized and organized the data into categories and subcategories. The categories were further analyzed through focused coding. Here, the most frequently occurring patterns and layers of meaning in the participant journal entries and photos emerged. The connections between categories provided insight into, for instance, common processes, tensions, explanations, causes, consequences, and/or experiences of contingent groups. Finally, the combinations of such categories helped to formulate themes from the data (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

I met periodically to consult with my advisor to review and discuss the process and emerging themes. After several rounds of coding, I revisited the research questions to see how the emergent themes in the data speak to the lived experience of contingent group members (Saldana, 2009).

In order to be honest in my communication with the research participants, as well as in my reporting of the findings, I maintained a reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose of the journal was to acknowledge my own values or biases, record personal challenges during the research project, and document my efforts to genuinely engage with the participants. I met periodically to consult with my advisor to review and discuss the process and emerging themes of the data.

Confirmability and trustworthiness of the findings were ensured by member checking at the conclusion of the analysis of the data (see Appendix I). I reviewed the findings with approximately 10 percent of the participants, one from each participant group. I developed an executive summary with a concise description of the research purpose and design, names and

descriptions of each major theme, as well as sample exemplars. For member checking, participants were asked to critically analyze the findings and comment on them. The participants affirmed the findings resonated with their experiences, views, and feelings. Thus, no further changes were made to the findings.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of contingent group membership is relevant to communication scholars because individuals navigate their assimilation and identification processes through communication. George and Chattopadhyay (2016) encourage researchers by stating they "need to be sure that our future definitions of organizational identification continue to reflect the realities of people's work lives and their complex identifications with the organizations they work for and with" (p. 96). This research project contributes to the growing body of work exploring identification and socialization issues for a variety of different contingent group members in institutional spaces.

With this study, I hoped to amplify the voices of outsiders within, those with courtesy stigmas, and contract workers in regard to their experiences as contingent group members. The next chapter reviews the findings of this analysis. Overall, the findings identify common barriers to group membership and outcomes for contingent group members who are in a liminal space belonging, yet not belonging.

Chapter 4: Findings & Interpretation

Analyzing the complexities of contingent group membership through the common socialization experiences of outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers revealed six dominant themes. Stories of anticipation and the experiences of joining their respective target groups emerged in the theme, (1) Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry. This theme includes the participants' expectations and the emotional outcomes of contingent group membership. The second theme revealed that all participant groups experienced (2) Stigma Shock as a result of stigmatizing messages from their target groups. These messages were unanticipated, surprising, and hurtful. The participants' encounters with socially constructed communicative barriers appear as a theme dubbed (3) Suspended in Liminality. Ultimately, experiences of liminality isolated participants, resulting in the fourth theme (4) Hesitant Identification. This theme explores how these barriers impeded group identification, as well as relational development with others. The participants strategically used communication to manage their contingent group roles, which are represented in the fifth theme, (5) Communication Strategies. Finally, in theme six, (6) The Paradox of (not) Belonging, participant journals reflect the essence of contingent group membership and how they experience (not) belonging. Without exception, the study participants from all three groups experienced contingent group membership in similar and meaningful ways. Each of the themes are discussed below.

Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry

All study participants developed expectations about their future university, jobs, and/or roles during anticipatory socialization. This is consistent with existing literature (e.g., Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010; Levine & Hoffner, 2006; Power & Myers, 2017). The reasons for becoming contingent group members were different for each group. Some participants

intentionally sought contingent group membership. For others, career options brought about by professional or personal circumstances created an opportunity for group membership. Whatever the reason, all participants had high hopes for their respective professional and personal opportunities, as well as developing relationships with members of their respective target groups.

The international college students anticipated intercultural experiences, learning opportunities, developing career options, and enjoying a sense of adventure. The ADA university staff anticipated the opportunity to support, accommodate, and advocate for students with disabilities, to be part of a greater system that supports students, to engage in personal growth, and to develop relationships across campus. The adjunct professors anticipated teaching students, developing relationships with other faculty, engaging in professional development, as well as having autonomy, income, and freedom from research or service expectations.

This theme helped to answer research questions one and two which asks about contingent group members' sense of belonging to their target group (RQ1) and what messages contingent group members receive from their target group about their status (RQ2). Members of each participant group were legitimately granted access to their target groups on a contingent basis. By virtue of being enrolled in university graduate school programs, the international graduate students studied, recreated, and resided with domestic students. Employment in student support services classified the ADA university staff as employees of their college or university. For the adjunct professors, contractual agreements formalized association with their employers, as are all faculty to their colleges and universities. While participants technically belonged to their target groups, their journals indicated varied awareness of contingent group status upon joining. Similarly, the international graduate students and ADA university staff expected acceptance from their respective groups without conditions or limitations; they were unaware their group

membership was contingent. The adjunct professors, on the other hand, were aware of their contingent membership due to the contractual nature of their positions.

Outsiders Within: Intentional and Goal Oriented

The international graduate students were intentional and goal oriented since they purposefully desired to study at American universities. The international graduate students learned about coming to the U.S. for school from a variety of sources. Family-based communication helped the students to determine the direction of their educational goals. For instance, Billy, a graduate student from China, discussed setting his intentions,

> When it came to actually mak[ing] the blueprint of going abroad for further study, people around me took a huge role. Since a young age, my parents would tell me stories about some of my cousins…living a pretty good life in [the] US which lead [*sic*] my thoughts to going abroad for higher education would guarantee a better living. My parents were always looking forward to send[ing] their children out and to see the world and build a worldwide-sight of view.

Billy's parents positively associated his cousins and education in the U.S. with success, thus influencing his choice to study in the U.S. Thanh, a graduate student from Vietnam, was pushed by her mother to study in the U.S. because she thought it would enhance Thanh's education and future career. Thanh said, "I made a deal with her: I would go if I could study Biology as my major. And I was on my way to the United States 4 months after." Like Billy, Thanh's parent influenced her with expectations of immediate and future success. Jaya, a graduate student from India, was also motivated by a family member, her brother. Jaya wrote, "Seeing him grow as a person in the U.S. made me see that this was the life I would want for myself as well." Jaya, too, had a family member who traveled to the U.S. for education and experienced a positive outcome.

Family conversation and experiences helped the international graduate student participants intentionally set education in the U.S. as a goal, as well as to develop expectations for success and personal growth.

For the international graduate students, a U.S. education offered enhanced educational opportunities, such as academic liberties, access to advanced technology, and educational prestige, among other benefits. For example, Abnik, a graduate student from Nepal, shared, "In my country, I was forced to choose between arts, sciences, and business...I, however, wanted to study history and literature along with physics…that was only possible in the US." Studying in the U.S. allowed Abnik to customize his education in ways he could not if he were to remain in Nepal. Talha, an international student from Bangladesh, specifically chose his graduate program in the U.S.,

> I chose United states as I found that U.S. offers esteemed civil engineering programs along with very reputed faculties from all over the world in many of its schools. The infrastructure projects we used to work on was mostly roads and bridges. Therefore, I started looking for graduate civil engineering program focusing on transportation engineering in different U.S. schools.

Talha researched his scholarly interests and learned U.S. universities have global projects. In order to meet his desired career goals, he decided to study in one of the world's esteemed civil engineering programs at a R1 university in the U.S. For others, like Billy, education in their field is not as advanced in their home countries. Having access to cutting edge technology in U.S. universities, as well as being able to collaborate with others doing similar studies, was a desirable choice. Billy explained, "I feel like it would be a competitive point in my resume…[I] want to find a job in [the] U.S. or back home. Because for [biomedical engineering], those big

names value the higher educational experience [from] abroad." Similar factors were considered by Stacia, a graduate student from Bulgaria. Stacia explained that having a U.S. education was a career advantage, "Where I come from, getting your higher education abroad is considered a lot more prestigious than staying and getting your education in your home country." This group of participants, international graduate students, chose graduate school in the U.S. for enhanced educational and career advantages.

In addition to future advantages, coming to the U.S. to explore a new country and its culture was a goal for several of the students. Wang, a graduate student from China, said, "I had always had a dream to come to the U.S. and learn more about the different cultures since I was in junior high." Wang shared he had a teacher who inspired him during those years. He held on to the desire to explore American culture and looked forward to that experience when he made plans to study abroad. Tookoa, a graduate student from Egypt, anticipated coming to the U.S. for many years as well, "When I was a teenager… it was my dream to pursue my education in the U.S. I also loved the American accent and used to mimic the pronunciation of my English teachers." Wang and Tookoa gained impressions of a cultural experience and joined their target group to fulfill their dreams and goals. Classroom discussions helped Wang and Tookoa form expectations, which influenced their future choices about being students in the U.S.

The international graduate student participants anticipated quality education, opportunities for enhanced careers, exposure to different cultures, independence, representation of their culture to their host country, and development of relationships with domestic students as elements of their study abroad experience. Suvarna, a graduate student from India, said it well,

> Scores of relatives and family friends encouraged me to pursue a graduate degree. They
> talked about the quality of life in the United States compared to India…When I reached

the U.S. and started my graduate school, I was excited [for] so many reasons. The wide

variety of courses I could choose from was fantastic. The opportunity to be a researcher

in labs with state-of-the-art technology was great. The exposure to a new culture, cuisine,

people, and so much more.

This subtheme, Intentional and Goal Oriented, exemplifies the process of anticipatory

socialization and the ways the international graduate students purposefully selected their roles.

Unfortunately, prior to becoming international graduate students, the participants were unaware

they would hold contingent group status, as outsiders within, which will be further unpacked in

the next theme Stigma Shock.

Courtesy Stigma: Circumstances and Opportunities

Unlike the international graduate students who were intentional and goal-oriented about

their contingent role, the ADA university staff entered their contingent group when personal

circumstances and job opportunities provided a chance to serve students with disabilities.

Kandace, an ADA program manager at a R-1 university in the central-states region, reflected on

her decision to work in her position. She said, "Looking back, I've always been a 'helper'…I'm

glad I ended up where I did, but it was definitely not a field that I knew about when I started

out." Kandace, like several other participants, happened upon her job. She stated it well, "As

many of us do, I came across this field during the course of my career, as opposed to attending

grad school with this goal in mind." Megan, an access specialist from an R-1 university in the

western-states region, applied because she had similar work from a previous position. She

shared, "I was a mental health therapist…(at) a community mental health center…I became an

ADA staff person because I needed a job… I'm grateful I was offered a job that helps make the

world more accessible for people with disabilities." Kandace and Megan did not have their

specific jobs as intentional career goals; however, the work was related to their personal commitment to service.

For Stephanie, an access specialist from an R-1 university in the central-states region, the opportunity to support students with disabilities was only part of the reason she was interested in her position. She said, "The most profound reason…is to respect students who are asking for help." Previously, her daughter had been mislabeled as "learning disabled" and "singled out as a problem." The experience affected them both, planting a desire for Stephanie to extend dignity and respect to the students she served. The aspiration to serve students in this manner is echoed by Katherine, an ADA coordinator at a private university in the central-states region, whose son has ADHD. Katherine reflected, "I imagine him trying to navigate the process, and I would want him to have an easy time of it." Knowing her son's challenges moved Katherine to serve students with disabilities in a way that was welcoming and helpful. Megan journaled that she had a history of personal challenges that she managed without assistance. Her struggles influenced interest in her position to "provide accommodations…validate their need for accommodations as well as show them I accept them and value them." The prospect to support, accommodate, and advocate for students with disabilities, be part of a greater system of support to students, help create more diverse universities, experience personal growth, and develop relationships with students were presented to the ADA university staff participants when they considered their positions. Often the ADA university staff described their roles as student allies.

This subtheme, Circumstances and Opportunities, exemplifies the process of anticipatory socialization and the ways the ADA university staff anticipated their role with their target group. This group of participants were unaware they would hold contingent group status within the

larger university community via courtesy stigma, which will be further explained in the next theme, Stigma Shock.

Contract Workers: Circumstances and Economic Scarcity

Most adjunct professors experienced personal and career circumstances similar to the ADA university staff. However, the career circumstances were often coupled with economic scarcity when they sought employment as contract faculty. Several adjunct professor participants pursued adjunct teaching as a means of supplementing income while in graduate school and beyond. The decision to conveniently earn extra income by way of adjunct teaching was attractive to Melissa, an adjunct professor at a community college in the mid-west-states region, who was a Ph.D. candidate at the time. In Melissa's journal she said, "since the community college was near my home, and I was no longer required to be on campus at the university every day [for my Ph.D. program], I decided to apply." For Melissa, teaching as an adjunct was a matter of convenience regarding location and available time. Julianna, an adjunct from an R-1 university in the midwest-states region, who was also a Ph.D. student, was encouraged by a peer to explore adjunct teaching "because it is an excellent way to make extra money." After finishing her doctoral program, it became evident that working as a full-time professor was not going to complement her spouse's job. "We are pragmatic people, so we decided that my career would take the backseat," Julianna explained. She continues to teach on a contract basis for several universities. Don, an adjunct professor at an R-1 university in the midwest-states region, wrote, "Very simply, I was in the right place at the right time." Shortly after defending his doctoral dissertation, Don's department chair asked him to step in to teach a class when a professor resigned. The adjunct professors and ADA university staff are similar in this subtheme in that

they had an opportunity to take their role rather than seeing the target group membership as a goal.

As a graduate student, Taylor, an adjunct professor from an R-1 university in the midwest-states region taught college classes to supplement her income. Later, in the same year she received her Ph.D. and had a baby. Taylor decided not to pursue a tenure-track position because she wanted to care for her child. Yet, she felt she needed to keep up with her academic responsibilities, as well as desiring to be part of the academic world. Adjunct teaching gave Taylor, "flexibility that would allow me to spend time with my baby (and, by the time I got hired as a lecturer, another on the way) and also keep one foot in the academic world." Taylor anticipated being an adjunct professor would provide for both her career and personal needs. The flexibility of contracted work and Taylor's desire to continue to work in the academic setting were circumstantial factors that brought her into contract work. Being an adjunct professor allowed Lori, who taught at a community college in the midwest-states region, to hold numerous teaching positions ranging from early childhood through graduate level education courses. In Lori's 24 years as an educator, 13 of those years have been on contract status as an adjunct professor, which has allowed her great flexibility to pursue appointments that she finds interesting or one that will develop her expertise. Lori recounted, "I taught everything from developmental reading courses to every imaginable teacher education course to freshman and senior seminar courses to liberal arts courses at community colleges and universities alike." With their contract status, the participants in the adjunct professor group, anticipated opportunities to teach college and university students, they looked forward to building relationships with other faculty and students, hoped to continue to progress both professionally and scholarly, and desired to position themselves for permanent appointment. Contract status provided these adjunct

professors with autonomy to instruct the courses they desired, bring in income, and have freedom from research and service expectations. Due to the contractual nature of their employment, adjunct professors were aware they would hold contingent group status. However, they were unaware that their contingent group status would be stigmatized, which will be further explained in the next theme, Stigma Shock.

Inclusive Messages

As Jablin's organizational assimilation model (1987, 2001) explains, the participants experienced an adjustment between their expectations and the realities of their roles. As with most new group members, the participants struggled with understanding their role, social norms, and organizational culture. Typically, during the encounter phase organizational members help new members understand the organization's norms and structures and generally communicate positive and welcoming messages to the participants, indicating membership. All the participants journaled about experiences where they received affirmation, appreciation, and acknowledgment from the target group that signaled some level of inclusion. As a result, the contingent group members developed some level of belonging at individual, group, and organizational levels.

The domestic students communicated inclusion, collaboration, and shared values to the international graduate students at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Target group messages at the individual level included words and acts of affirmation, social support, and appreciation. For instance, Abnik a graduate student from Nepal, disclosed, "My roommates were very much involved in my life due to our close proximity. They were the first people I'd go to when I had any kind of trouble, emotional, financial or otherwise." Being socially supported by domestic peers, Abnik's target group, communicated inclusion. Danilo, a graduate student from the Philippine Islands, experienced similar social support when he was in need, "Most

recently I was faced with some medical troubles that [made] me feel lonely… my friends [took] turns to be around me. That really [made] me feel like I was at home and around my family." Danilo's use of the words "family" and "home" reveals a level of belonging among domestic student peers. When individual domestic students offered support, it communicated a sense of connection to the participants. Hahn, a graduate student from Vietnam, recalled a second-year Ph.D. student who answered her questions and gave her support when she started her doctoral studies. Hahn shared,

> [He answered] all of my questions…he told me about the politics of teaching…students would try to test the GTAs. [He said,] 'If you can survive for the first 2 weeks, then you will be okay.' I was kind of emotional and touched when I received that advice. That was something I never thought that I will [*sic*] experience.

Hahn was given peer advice from domestic students about her organizational role and how to perform her role and relate to others, which informed her of organizational norms. Receiving this information helped Hahn to develop a sense of being supported and welcomed at the individual level. Stacia recalled a conversation with a friend that made her feel connected, "I shared a Facebook post about a study showing that students from my country tend to be more intolerant and less aware of international and humanitarian issues" she journaled. "I discussed this with an American friend, who understood it, and yet joked that all the people she knows from my country are sweet." When she started a potentially risky conversation, her friend made her feel at ease and welcomed.

When asked to provide a story about experiencing support and community on campus, Billy recounted a camping trip with a group of campus students where he felt included. He shared that memory,

The one I love the most is camping adventure. We would group up in dozens of people

and drive to the lake nearby where there were water and campgrounds…The typical

activity would be setting up our gears by the shelter and staring up the campfire for BBQ.

Then ice breaking would take place. We would try whatever heats up the atmosphere,

ping-pong drinks, Kala-ok, storytelling, truth-dare...It was fun hanging out in the wild

like that and it was relaxing as well.

Fun interaction between domestic and international students helped Billy to feel included, accepted, and free from feeling self-conscious.

The participants received messages at the organizational level that were affirming, welcoming, and inclusive. As a new international graduate student from India, Jaya felt included by the target group at the organizational level when she attended a university event. She journaled,

[T]he university held an event … where I was introduced to the different things that were

associated with being a student at this university...This was a fun night as I met a lot of

new people at the stadium and made new friends. Also, while learning those things, I felt

like a true student member and I realized that I was now a part of a bigger community. I

felt like I belonged here."

Organizational messages of welcome and inclusion helped Jaya to establish a sense of belonging as a student. Her belonging is evidenced by her use of "true student member" and "I belonged here." Hanh received support from her university that helped her to feel welcomed when she arrived as a new student,

[D]uring my first two weeks of staying in the States, I had to quarantine and take care of

paper works for my GTA [Graduate Teaching Assistant] position at the same time.

People from the school of journalism, [offices that support international students], and

[student organization for international students] provided great supports for me during

such a difficult time…I was feeling the sense of welcomeness too.

Figure 1

Inclusivity Yard Sign

Note. Esme's photo of a sign in her neighborhood made her feel included.

Coming to unfamiliar organizational culture during a difficult time, Hahn received supportive

messages from her new university. Hanh's use of "sense of welcomeness" is evidence she felt

welcomed and included. The care and assistance she received communicated that she was

welcomed as a new member. Esme's photo titled Inclusivity Yard Sign (Figure 1) reads "No

matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor" in three languages: Spanish,

English, and Arabic. The sign was in a lawn in her neighborhood. She used this image to

illustrate how she felt included in her university's college town because it communicated inclusion by being welcoming. These welcoming messages transcended to the ADA university staff as well.

The ADA university staff shared affirming messages they received from both their target group (students with disabilities) and dominant group (administrators and faculty). Interactions with students they serve caused the ADA university staff to sense they were appreciated. Megan felt honored when students shared details about their disabilities, "Some tell me quite a bit about their lives…It's brave of them…It amazes me that some students are marginalized in multiple ways but still persist in their college education." When the students shared personal information with Megan, she felt included in their experience. Jan, an ADA case supervisor at a private university in the northeast-states region, bonded with the students she serves as well. Many accommodated students return to update her on how they are progressing after college. Jan shared an interaction with a student that made her feel appreciated and part of the student's success, "Many of them are so fun to work with, and enrich our days when they come in. I am still in touch with several students…and consider them to be friends now." Jan interpreted ongoing relationship with prior students as an indication of inclusion. The ADA university staff journals often documented reciprocal relationships; the ADA university staff participants offered social support and assistance, in turn, the students offered trust and disclosure. The personal communication between the students and the ADA university staff communicated affirmation, appreciation, and acknowledgment that signaled inclusion from their target group, students with disabilities, at the individual level.

The ADA university staff received inclusion messages from the administration and faculty as well. Matthew, the associate director of ADA services at a private university in the

western-states region, enjoyed positive acknowledgment from administrators and faculty. He

shared, "Individuals recognize me and say hello…people say supportive and nice things about

me when I am not around. This even occurs with a large number of faculty…At the Presidential

level, he has commented at…meetings that accommodations are important." Receiving personal

affirmation in his position at his university made him feel accepted, appreciated, and included, as

well as the team he represents.

When faculty and administrators sought education from Jan and her program, she felt

they were included in the work of the university. She shared,

> [F]aculty/staff…on campus are appreciative to have guidance from someone that focuses
>
> on this area. They feel unprepared at times to deal with students who have disabilities and
>
> appreciate the insight that comes from our office. They seek education on how best to
>
> serve students with disabilities…There is true collaboration that takes place to
>
> troubleshoot different scenarios that arise every day…there are many people who
>
> appreciate and support our office.

Cooperation and working with both administrators and professors communicated to Jan that she

was not only welcomed by the campus community but included and valued. Stacey, an ADA

case worker at a private university in the western-states region, echoed this feeling but included

the university at large. She shared, "[M]any people of all identities are becoming more aware,

accepting, and supportive of minority, or stigmatized groups. In my position as an ADA worker,

I have found I am welcomed, respected, and appreciated on campus by staff, faculty, and

students." The inclusion messages others resulted in perceptions of oneness at the individual,

group, and organizational levels for the ADA university staff. The welcoming and inclusive

messages were also experienced by the other group of university participants.

The adjunct professors also received inclusive messages from their target group. The messages from the administration and faculty communicated inclusion, collaboration, and shared values at the individual, group, and organizational levels. For example, Julianna expressed appreciation for the support she received from individuals during her adjunct professor experience. She noted,

> "[Some professors] in my department do a great job of providing emotional support, which really makes me feel like I belong. It also makes me feel respected. [They are] also great at providing informational support. Because faculty are privy to things such as course scheduling plans before adjuncts, it is nice when a faculty member gives me a heads up.

Julianna felt included and "respected" when individual professors communicated with her. Julianna explains that this makes her feel like she does "belong." As a new hire, Bailey, an adjunct from a community college in the southwest-states region, experienced similar support, "The chair of the department took me to coffee and showed me around the campus when I was first hired." She continued in her journal entry, "There are three full-time professors there that are very nice…One provided me with a great list of classroom activities when I told him I was struggling." Most contingent group members expected their peers to be "very nice." The adjunct professors were grateful for assistance or information when they asked for it from faculty. Appreciation from an individual professor was important to Jamie, an adjunct at an R-1 university from the midwest-states region, "She [the professor] thanked me for my hard work and wanted me to know that she appreciated me…I found that so supportive. It made me feel good to know she recognized that we [adjuncts] also work hard" Affirming, informational, and supportive communication from target group members caused the adjunct professor participants

to feel included and to have some sense of belonging.

The adjunct professors also received inclusive messages at the department level. Don, an adjunct from an R-1 university in the midwest-states region, appreciated the efforts his department took to make him feel included. He shared, "[M]y department was very good to me while I was an adjunct and, in my opinion, often went out of its way to make me feel like an integral part of its activities." Intentionally including Don in departmental activities made him feel welcomed and "integral" to the department. Similarly, Elizabeth, an adjunct at a community college in the midwest-states region, perceived her department to be inclusive as well, "I think one of the things that stands out to me most is that they [the department] are so great at celebrating with one another." She continued, "Whether it's an email celebrating a top paper/panel award from a conference, annual potlucks, or retirement parties, the department comes together to celebrate and makes everyone included in those celebrations." Collectively, these adjunct professors received messages from their departments that demonstrated inclusion.

Universities as organizations communicated value for adjunct professors' contributions as well. Riley, an adjunct from an R-1 university in the southern-states region, felt included and welcome at the organizational level because she received messages that she fit in with the university at large. She shared,

> "I feel that the people who hired me respect and admire that I am not like the 'typical' professor, and that my unique experiences can positively contribute to students' learning experiences. This has been very humbling and encouraging and has helped me overcome some of my self-doubt."

Riley had affirming messages that she was seen as special by her university. Lori sensed she was welcomed and included because she had group favor. Lori received communication about

adjunct professors' role in the organization, "We [adjunct professors] have been repeatedly told that we are the 'backbone' of the colleges and that higher education as we know it in this country could not exist without us." Lori identified with her role as an adjunct professor and accepted praise from the organization that she and her adjunct professor peers are essential. In summary, adjunct professors received messages from the organizational level that communicated they were desired and welcomed. Interacting with the target group at the individual, group, and organizational levels gave the participants from all groups a sense of belonging and identification.

Perceiving membership with their target groups caused the participants to feel a range of positive emotions, including feeling special, supported, respected, included, and welcomed. Traditionally, scholars using Jablin's organizational assimilation model (1987, 2001) might progress these participants to the metamorphosis stage of socialization. Indeed, the international graduate students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors had acclimated to their roles, knew the group practices, and acquired an understanding of the organizational system, which are typically markers of metamorphosis. However, the participants, despite being welcomed, also encountered stigma that limited them from becoming insiders or bona fide group members. The target groups consciously and/or unconsciously communicated conditions and limitations that established contingency in exclusionary ways. The participants encountered verbal and nonverbal messages that not only negatively separated them from their target group but demeaned their identities. All participants were unprepared and shocked by the stigma messages they encountered, which are addressed in the next theme, Stigma Shock.

Stigma Shock

The shock of being stigmatized in their role was not anticipated by any participants. The international college students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors were accepted to some degree, and allowed to function contingently in their target groups, which was illustrated in the previous theme. However, each participant group was restricted from full participation due to socially constructed stigma that prohibited them from becoming bona fide group members.

This theme also helped to answer research questions one and two, which asks how contingent group members experience a sense of belonging to their target group (RQ1) and what messages do contingent group members receive from their target group about their status (RQ2). Each group experienced stigma messages from their target groups. The target group that communicated stigma to the outsiders within participants, international graduate students, is domestic students. Domestic students have power, privilege, and social status. The target group for contract workers, adjunct professors, is the employing organization (made up of primarily administrators and faculty), which has power, privileges, and social status to which contract workers contingently belong. The desired target group for both the international graduate students and the adjunct professors were privileged groups in the university setting. Stigma messages from domestic students were directed to the international graduate students due to their cultural difference. Stigma messages from administrators and faculty were directed to the adjunct professors due to their contract status.

The ADA university staff received stigma messages from two groups: administrators and faculty, the dominant and privileged group, as well as students with disabilities, their target group. The target out-group, students with disabilities, for individuals with courtesy stigmas are groups or organizations that have been sociomaterially constructed to have less power, privilege, and social status by the dominant group, administrators and faculty. The ADA university staff

experienced courtesy stigma and received stigma messages from both groups due to their affiliation with the stigmatized student group. These stigma messages were not only unanticipated, but they also caused the participants to feel unsure, defensive, unsupported, disrespected, and unvalued. Each participant group's experience with stigma shock is reviewed below.

Outsiders Within: Stigmatized by Cultural Differences

International graduate students, the outsiders within participant group, were disheartened by being stereotyped and misunderstood by their domestic peers. The participants received stigma messages primarily as racial/ethnic microaggressions.

Sue et al. (2007) define microaggression as a form of stigmatizing communication that subtly tears at individuals' identity and dignity. Microaggressions are categorized as micro-assaults (derogatory comments and actions), micro-insults (invectives specific to identity or background), and micro-invalidation (invalidating or discrediting the experience of the stigmatized with regard to discrimination) (Sue et al., 2007). The international graduate student participants often received stigmatizing racial/ethnic messages from their target group. Jaya stated, "There have been several incidents of microaggression towards my ethnicity." She recalled telling a domestic student she wanted a pizza. The student responded by asking if she knew what a pizza was and asked, "Don't Indians just eat curry?" The memory of this insult that revealed stereotypical assumptions about Indian nationals, was upsetting to Jaya. Unfortunately, Jaya was not alone. Several participants discussed being subject to harassment because of their ethnicity, skin color, and accent. Talha was surprised to be shunned when he stopped at a gas station and asked for information,

I found a guy who did not even talk to me when I asked which way the restroom is. Initially I thought the guy is deaf and felt bad for him. Later another customer came in and he started to talk with him. I realized maybe I look a little different than him, which made him despise me in some way. I felt a little bad for myself.

It hurt Talha's feelings when he was blatantly ignored based on his cultural difference. This kind of microaggression upset the international graduate students. Tookoa journaled about experiencing a micro-insult, "I even remember a student who asked me 'who are you?' when I gave a Middle Eastern dance tutorial to Arabic class students. I felt racially profiled." She continued, "Because I wear a headscarf and I'm from the Middle East, I was asked weird questions. The least I could say about these questions is that they are a result of ignorance, Islamophobia, xenophobia, and/or a biased media." Jaya and Tookoa were shocked and hurt by the questioning from their domestic student peers. Stereotyped and misinformed questions and comments revealed to the participants that their target group peers saw them as not only different but labeled them based on uninformed opinions or judgements. The stereotypical generalization is consistent with the literature on stigma (e.g., Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Goffman, 1963; Smith, 2007). Stigma scholarship demonstrates that stigmatized individuals are viewed by privileged groups as simplified and stereotypical, where all members have the same attributes. Tookoa explained that the questions were inappropriate and "made me feel questioned and interrogated." The international graduate students felt insulted because they took considerable effort to learn about the U.S. and to learn English. They talked with others who studied in the U.S. and learned what they could to navigate the experience before coming to the U.S. These outsiders within, the international graduate student participants, were bewildered to find the

domestic students lacked discernment related to their international identities, and in general devalued their cultural difference.

Challenges and attempts to assimilate into American culture were perplexing and off-putting for participants. "When I entered the U.S.," Esme, a graduate student from Iran, remembered, "someone told me, 'No, you're not Asian.' What the hell?" She was astonished that someone would challenge her about her own cultural identity. "Asian people. This means only people with specific physical appearance are Asians? She continued, "That's weird, my country is located in Asia!" Esme's experience was a microinvalidation (Sue et al., 2007) relating to her personal experience and identity. Similarly, Thanh, a graduate student from Vietnam, was subject to invalidation as well; she felt the most disrespected when it came to her name. Thanh was dumbfounded by the double standard she encountered when her domestic peers were upset or frustrated when she could not say or spell their names, but they in turn, took no effort to correctly pronounce hers. She wrote, "I'm not sure if Americans are generally too ignorant to want to learn how to say someone's name." She selected an American pseudonym, Amelia, because domestic students "tend to be more comfortable with things they can remember/relate to." The double-standard was insulting and caused her to give up part of her identity as Vietnamese. Abnik experienced a micro-assault when his religious identity was not only challenged but demeaned. He was taken aback by peers referring to him as a "pagan" because of his non-Christian background. "Most of the people at my institution were devout Christians and were very big on proselytization. I was frequently subjected to uncomfortable conversations that were intended to proselytize me." The label assigned to him was demeaning specific to his religion and pathologized his values (Sue et al., 2007).

The participants also encountered language-based microaggressions. Billy recounted an experience of trying to socialize with domestic students,

> Things went weird when a chatting group of domestics suddenly had some international students join…I saw a group getting pretty good chatting atmosphere, so I decided to join in and make some new friends. But once I hopped in and introduced myself, the topic of chat seem[ed] restricted a lot. They were trying to say everything mutually and in an easier understanding way as I could tell. As if they were concerned about touching offensive topics in terms of tradition or religion.

Billy was communicatively marked as culturally dissimilar based on the target group's communication accommodation. He experienced discomfort and negative difference due to the way domestic students interacted and spoke to him. Later, he added, "I feel uncomfortable with the way people might think of me when I…talk to some strangers. This situation even got worse during the pandemic since people just started to be sensitive about racism and Asian assaulting incidents constantly happens." Billy sensed a heightened awareness of his cultural difference, specifically related to his Asian identity. As a graduate teaching assistant, Esme felt stigmatized based on her language accent. She explained how domestic students reacted in the classroom,

> You have accent, and some people don't like their instructor to be an international person. Some people would give a weird look at you when you start talking. Some students are just biased about non-American teachers and give you bad reviews. I had students who went to [the department] chair to complain about my accent. It was devastating.

Not only was Esme marked by her accent, but her domestic students judged and criticized her as an instructor based on her cultural distinctiveness. Stacia was also surprised by comments

regarding her distinctiveness from the domestic students. She wrote, "My fluency in English as a second language has always been something I took pride in…native speakers, however, always seem to be able to tell, which irritates me." Speaking distinctively set the international graduate students apart as culturally different. As much as the participants tried to fit in or match their target group, they were still labeled as negatively distinctive.

Another way the international graduate students felt culturally stigmatized was not being able to voice their political opinions. In their journals the international graduate students observed their target group discussing political issues without trying to involve them in their conversation. The participant group perceived the silencing was specific to their international status. Danilo expressed, "I got this sense in the conversation where everyone else thought that it was not my place to talk about politics…or I did not really know anything about the politics here because I am an international student." Shutting down Danilo's voice was stigmatizing to his status as an international graduate student. Esme felt silenced as well, "It's like you're not from

Figure 2

Political Twitter Post

Note. Esme's political statement on Twitter

this country, and you are not allowed to vote, so who are you to talk about the U.S. politics? It

always makes me stop talking about politics in front of my American friends." Esme used a

Twitter post (Figure 2) as an example of her micro-aggressive questioning. She and her friends

from her home country, as well as Iranian friends in the U.S., stay abreast of politics at the local,

national, and international levels. Esme wanted to offer her views to domestic peers. However,

the group would not allow her to share.

Being stigmatized and silenced was confounding for the international graduate students.

Many came from countries that interact with or are affected by U.S. policy. The participants

considered their background as international students would lend credibility to their opinions and

give different perspectives on governmental issues. To international graduate student

participants' surprise, their voices and opinions were not welcomed. They were treated as if they

were not informed about political issues and because they were culturally different. Staff in

universities also experience stigma messages. The ADA university staff work with and for a

stigmatized group and experience stigma on their behalf.

Courtesy Stigma: Stigma by Association

When the ADA university staff intervened for disabled students, they were shocked and

discouraged by the reactions of hostility from faculty. They encountered hierarchical

microaggressions (Young et al., 2015). This negative form of communication is often directed at

university staff members when they experience communication that systemically values (or

devalues) individuals based on their institutional role. Megan succinctly summed it up, "Society

doesn't value disabled folx, so society doesn't value those who work with disabled folx." She,

and the other ADA university staff, experienced courtesy stigma because of the stigmatized

students they serve.

The participants journaled about encounters with faculty who questioned accommodations given to students and challenged the staff's authority. Celeste, an ADA case worker from an R-2 university in the western-states region, explained, "[T]hey [professors] want to see documentation and my process. Usually, this is professors [*sic*] who have been here a long time or those in health-related fields such as clinical mental health, counseling, and nursing." While Celeste understands that these individuals may be content area experts, she was frustrated that the professors do not recognize the university has given the ADA university staff authority to do the job of coordinating access and accommodations. Celeste felt undermined and invalidated. Celeste observed that those who often challenge her authority hold doctorates. She said, "It is sad to admit, but those with 'DR' before [their] name really changes how people treat you on campus…I am qualified, and they need to respect my expertise as well." Unfortunately, faculty weren't the only group on campus who stigmatized ADA university staff. Jan recounted an experience when she served on a committee for web enhancement.

I was there to represent our office, and access to our website for students with

disabilities…It was an awkward situation because the others in the room were obvious in

their disdain that someone from such a non-relevant office was present on this committee.

The derogatory slights communicated a hierarchical microaggression (Young et al., 2015) to Jan that she was perceived as a person of lower value due to her role on campus.

The ADA university staff are different from the international graduate students and the adjunct professors regarding their experiences of stigma because, the ADA university staff participants were relegated to stigma status by two groups: university administration and faculty

(the dominant group), as well as the students with disabilities (the target group), whom they supported.

The students with disabilities, the ADA university staff's target group, also used separating stigma messages. Jan observed "students are becoming more vocal and insistent on their rights to have access." She added this is what the ADA university staff advocate for, however, Jan explained, "students are moving from high school into a different environment that operates under different laws and yet they want the same things afforded in 'no child left behind.'" The participants of this group were dismayed, and often hurt, when the students they supported reacted to them with anger and deferred responsibility when the students were frustrated. Matthew gave a few examples of denying students' requests. He said, "This causes a confrontational experience, no matter how warm and kind I am working with the student. They say things like 'I would have (blank), if you would just use your authority to make it happen.'" Matthew's example conversation reflects a type of hierarchical microaggression (Young et al., 2015). In this exemplar, students are perceiving the ADA university staff as subservient to their needs. In her reflection, Katherine gave an example, "I have been yelled at and cussed at by a student who was upset when I had to cut him off when his exam time elapsed. He was anxious and upset. That day I bore the brunt of it." Katherine's example further demonstrates hierarchical microaggression (Young et al., 2015). She said she is startled and upset when students treat her this way. It is difficult for her, but she tries not to take their actions and words personally. Both the dominant and target groups socially constructed stigmas that prohibited the ADA university staff from becoming bona fide group members.

***Contract Workers: Stigmatized by Contract Labor Status***

Unlike international graduate students and ADA university staff, the adjunct professors were aware of their status as contract staff. Yet, adjunct professors were surprised by treatment from administrators and faculty that communicated hierarchical stigma, similar to, yet distinct from the ADA university staff. Adjunct professors were often subject to hierarchical microaggressions that communicated little or no value for them as individuals based on their institutional role (Young et al., 2015). Yet, their experiences of hierarchical microaggressions were often rooted in compliance and exploitation.

The messages from adjunct professors' target group members implied adjunct professors should be grateful for their work, which was disconcerting. The adjunct professors were unprepared for the technical and material barriers they encountered, which excluded them from their target group, faculty and administrators. They were dismayed by the lack of encouragement to build community and exclusion from administrative and organizational communication. The adjunct professors felt they were seen, called, and treated by administrators and faculty as failures who failed at progressing their scholarship. For example, Don had an encounter with a prominent professor from his graduate program who, when he learned Don was "still adjuncting [*sic*]…had a look in his eye [that] told me that he either pitied me or was scared for me." The professor's judgment of Don was based in deeply rooted stigma. According to Julianna, the target group had the attitude that "adjuncts are failed academics who shouldn't speak up, but instead should feel grateful." The target group denigrated adjunct professors with patronizing attitudes and expectations of acquiescence and gratitude. The social and moral stigma of being perceived as a failure led to shaming and exclusion from the target group. Jamie felt the sting of being marginalized, "some [professors] are…outwardly condescending and dismissive." Taylor felt the same separation, saying, "Even though I have the same degree as my colleagues, I am in

no way a part of the community in my department." Taylor shared a picture (Figure 3) of her

performing her adjunct professor duties while tending to her infant child. "Maternity leave? Not

Figure 3

Grading with a 4-Week-Old
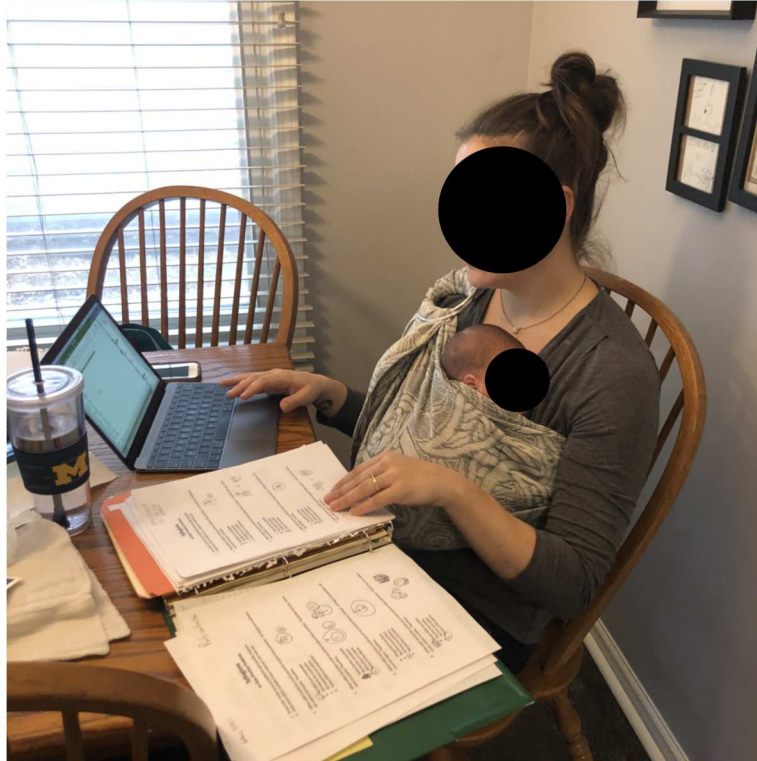
Note. Taylor's picture shows her grading while swaddling her 4-week-old baby.

for adjuncts," explained Taylor. "We don't get paid if we don't work." Taylor shared this picture

because she felt it exemplified the lack of support from her employer, which is one way she does

not benefit from being a bona fide group member.

The adjunct professor participants were hurt by the lack of support from their target

group to advance their research and publications. Bailey shared an interaction with a professor

that demonstrates how fellow faculty withhold support,

When I emailed a full-time professor in the department to assist me in planning the route

to researching as a part of the university, she was dismissive. Starting the email with 'I'm

confused' why are you researching? She advised me that I could not collect data over the

summer and a 'bunch of people need to sign off on you actually being able to get the

data.' She did not, however, tell me who those people were. She ended the email telling

me that I can seek publication, but it is something they don't need to know, and that the

department only really talks about this being an option for full time faculty and adjuncts

should focus on their teaching abilities. I was so shut down by this response that I never

attempted to pursue my research goals.

Bailey felt "shut down" based on her interactions with other faculty. The professor was

indifferent to Bailey's efforts to progress her scholarship. Bailey remained socially invalidated

and was denied respect, inclusion, and support from her target group.

Adjunct professors described how being stigmatized by the target group can have

negative long-term consequences. For instance, Lori was excluded from interviewing for a

tenure-track position because the hiring committee recognized she was an adjunct professor. The

chair of the hiring committee hesitantly explained to her why she was not interviewed. He told

her the committee felt,

Someone who was willing to work so hard to be rewarded so little for such a long time is

someone who has proven to be dedicated to the passion of the craft of education and

doesn't need the title to remain faithful to the cause.

Lori journaled about how this individual blamed her for allowing the administration to take

advantage of her and that she deserved to be treated that way because she had allowed it for so

long. Not only was Lori marked as a failure, but she was also penalized for being a long-term

and arguably committed contract worker. Lori's treatment exemplifies target-group bias reflecting stereotypical perceptions that adjunct professors are socially constructed as undeserving of success. The adjunct professors were shocked, dismayed, and troubled by the target groups' discrediting and devaluing stigma messages.

The adjunct professors were not surprised by their contingent group status. Indeed, they agreed to contract work. However, the participants did not anticipate being stigmatized by their positions. While the adjunct professors were able to supplement incomes, teach students, and experience autonomy in their roles, many were bewildered by the target group's disregard of them in the form of contempt, indifference, exclusion, and exploitation.

Welcomed Yet Constrained

The international graduate students who were outsiders within, the ADA university staff with courtesy stigma, and adjunct professors as contract workers found they were both welcomed yet constrained as contingent group members. In contrast to the ideal manifestation of the metamorphosis phase of the organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001), the participants encountered predetermined, socially constructed boundaries that limited their group membership. These boundaries were socially constructed by way of stigma messages. The international graduate students were stigmatized because of their cultural difference. Stigma messages from domestic students were specific to their racial/ethnic identities, being noncitizens, and language use. The university administration and faculty used stigma messages to convey boundaries to the ADA university staff related to role misperceptions and hierarchical status. The adjunct professors also received stigmatizing messages about their hierarchical position in their universities from administrators and faculty due to their contract status. The stigma messages were not only shocking, they also communicatively constrained each participant group, albeit in

unique ways, to the liminal space of contingent group membership. The essence of liminality for contingent group members is addressed in the theme below.

Suspended in Liminality

This theme, Suspended in Liminality, explains how communication was used to restrict the participants to contingency and answers research question three, which asks how contingent group members experience their liminal status. Target groups impose conditions and limitations on the participants. These communicative barriers limited the participants' power and restricted their authority, constraining them to the liminal space of contingent group membership. The international graduate students, due to their cultural difference, were kept indeterminately "outside of a bubble," an in vivo code that captures the essence of how domestic students maintained bona fide group membership. The ADA university staff were relegated to stigma status by the positions they held accommodating students with disabilities. The ADA university staff were bound to contingent status by misconceptions of their role by both the dominant (faculty and administration) and target (students with disabilities) groups. The participants were left having to define and defend access with little promise of bona fide membership with either group. The adjunct professors were dismissed and excluded by their target group, behaviors that represented unanticipated barriers. The following subthemes exemplify the limitations imposed by bona fide group members who maintained contingent group liminality.

Outsiders Within: Outside of a Bubble

The international graduate students became self-conscious and guarded when interacting with domestic students. Abnik was guarded, even though he has been in the states for several years, "I always remained, and still remain, cautious of the fact that at times I may be singled out in a cohort just because I am not from here, which sometimes makes me uncomfortable." Every

participant expressed similar feelings of insecurity, being inhibited, having a sense of apartness, and exclusion. The domestic students socially constructed difference as a barrier to bona fide membership in the target group. Hahn recognized the barrier when she realized "I do not fully belong to whatever identity group [is] here in the U.S." Being culturally different set Hahn apart, she did not sense belonging because of that difference. Similarly, Wang used a metaphor to express this experience,

> As an international student, sometimes you would feel you are outside of a bubble in which people of the host culture live inside. International students cannot, sometimes, understand the nuances of the host culture. More often than not, the host community is not fully inclusive to international students. International students are sojourners, physically, or culturally.

Wang's metaphor of a bubble is phenomenologically significant because it speaks to the communicative barriers contingent group members encounter in the socialization experience. The experiences shared by Wang and others represent the participants' awareness that there was little chance for bona fide group membership. They felt powerless against the perceptions of their cultural difference, a contrived social disgrace, that barred them from bona fide group membership. The domestic students communicatively kept the international graduate students "outside of a bubble." Wang and the other participants were constrained to the liminal space of contingent group membership. They were allowed in the group, but not allowed to fully become part of the group. As contingent group members, the ADA university staff, reviewed next, experienced contingent group liminality differently than the international graduate students.

Courtesy Stigma: Defining and Defending Access

The ADA university staff viewed the dominant group, faculty and administrators, as fundamentally misunderstanding their role. Working to support the students with disabilities caused the administrators and faculty to perceive the ADA university staff as making things easier for students. "I often have to overcome the misconception that I have come to 'make' [faculty] do something that will compromise academic rigor," journaled Celeste. She continued explaining that faculty believe "it's my role to make things easier for privileged students who don't really have disabilities." Members of the administration and faculty viewed the ADA university staff participants' role as serving already privileged students, when in reality students with disabilities are marginalized (Barger, 2016; Bettencourt et al., 2018). This misperception was also exemplified by a conversation Matthew had with an administrator. Matthew quoted the individual as saying, "We are tired of you and these accommodations, like the 'disability gold card.'" Matthew was frustrated that the administrator viewed his work as giving ADA students advantages over other students rather than cultivating equity through accommodation. Jordana, an ADA resource and testing center coordinator at a R-2 university in the southwestern-states region, recalled having to explain to a professor in a classroom what she needed for a student. Jordana wrote, "[H]e started yelling at me in the lecture hall…He just went on a rant about how this was a huge inconvenience, not part of his job etc., students did not really need any 'special' accommodations, etc." The professor's ableism, prejudice against disability, was extended to Jordana by way of derogatory language and disrespectful interaction. Stephanie summed up the issue, "There [are] professors who are consumed with indignation and have expressed that if a student needs accommodation, then they probably are not suited to…be in college. This bias is why we have ADA compliance laws." Their collective experience connected with what Bettencourt et al. (2018) found that ableist professors have lower expectations for success and

perceive these students as an academic liability. This misperception of students with disabilities inclined the dominant group to view the students as a threat to academic standards. Thus, the dominant group misinterpreted the role of ADA university staff as giving preferential treatment to the students with disabilities.

The ADA university staff participant group viewed the target group, students with disabilities, as misunderstanding their role as well. The students with disabilities viewed the ADA university staff's function was to make them successful, rather than to ensure equal access. Matthew gave an example that illustrates this role misperception,

> [I have] a student who has attentional difficulties [and] wants to be granted on-campus living...because they don't want to have to focus on paying rent and don't want to have to pay for a parking pass or take the time to drive to campus. These things are not an access barrier…so we will not make accommodation for them.

Matthew explained that going beyond access barrier removal for the sake of comfort and student convenience is not within the ADA law. He had to decline the requests of students with disabilities when they asked for and expected treatment that were unrelated to their disability accommodations. This placed Matthew in a position to have to clarify his role to the students he serves.

Naomi, an access specialist at a private university in the midwestern-states region, explained, "Equal access is required, but success depends on each individual student. Some feel that because they work so hard, they should be given a higher grade. It is challenging to help students work through this." Because the target group, students with disabilities, did not clearly understand the role of the ADA university staff, the students request "things that do not have directly to do with barrier removal or maybe even their disability and have more to do with

something they don't like or don't want to deal with," according to Matthew. The ADA university staff felt they needed to define and defend their role when interacting with both the dominant group, faculty and administrators, and target groups, students with disabilities. Matthew reflected, "Working in a disability office has two modes I feel: gardening and battle." He journaled,

> We spend much of our day with rake and spade, tending to our garden of accommodations and access. If it isn't pruned and weeded regularly, the weeds of inaccessibility creep in…We want to nurture what we are growing and protect what we have...Sometimes we set the rake and spade aside in exchange for a sword and shield. Often, we are surrounded; students (and parents on) one side, faculty, the institution, and state and federal law covering all the others. It is a delicate conflict with preparation being our only true weapon.

Matthew took a picture (See Figure 4) of two books, one *Assistive Technology* and the other the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (*DSM-5*) to illustrate his metaphor of gardening and a battle. This image represents to Matthew how he equipped himself with information, as represented by *Assistive Technology*, and knowledge, as represented by *DSM-5,* in preparation nurture relationships and fight against misunderstanding.

Jordana expressed a similar need to defend and define her role and the challenges she faces with both the dominant and target groups, "Faculty need to be open to accommodations, students and parents need to be open to the drastic difference between high school and college." she continued, "They need to stop expecting the disability resources office to handle everything for those students." Jordana was caught between the two groups, having to defend access when interacting with faculty, and having to define her role when interacting with parents and

Figure 4

Knowledge is Power
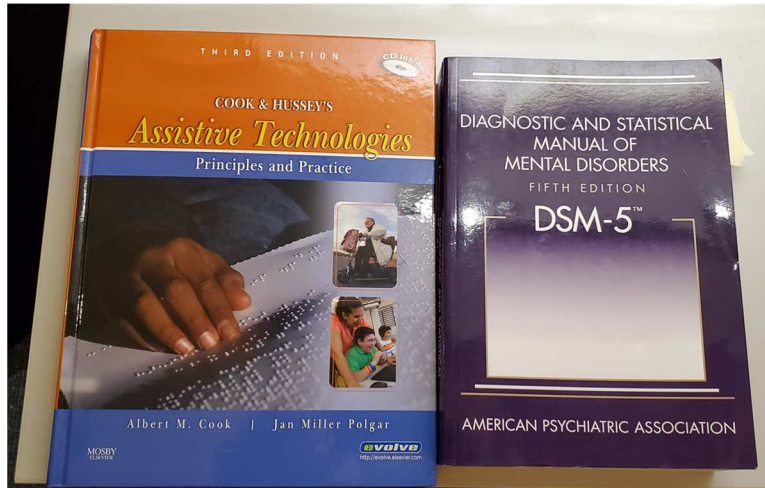
Note. Matthew's tools or weapons for defending and defining access.

students. This separates her from both the dominant and target groups. Matthew expressed

something similar, "[T]he work [would be] considerably less stressful if parents, students, staff,

and faculty understood what the work is: guaranteeing access not success. We don't give people

what they merely want, we give them what they actually need." As contingent group members

with a courtesy stigma, the participants were frustrated with the misunderstandings about their

role. They felt it took considerable effort to correct and educate those misconceptions. The

participant journals spoke to continuous tension in their role., tension both between the

administrators/faculty and students with disabilities, as well as tension in the dual role they play

as accommodator and enforcer. The participants saw their role as being helpful to both groups

because they advocated for students to overcome challenges related to their disabilities. The

ADA university staff saw their role as facilitating student success and lending a sympathetic ear.

However, the dominant and target groups often viewed the ADA university staff as irritating, as

well as (un)necessary enablers.

As a group, the ADA university staff journaled about the experience of being contingent group members with a courtesy stigma. The administration and faculty often stigmatized the students with disabilities and consigned the ADA university staff to the courtesy stigmatized status. Stacey, explained, "As an ADA worker at a university, I fit into a subset of disability identity. If the student did not have a disability, they would not have to interact with me or the office I work in." The administrators and faculty communicatively kept the ADA university staff outside of their dominant group constrained to the liminal space of contingent group membership.

Contract Workers: Expendable and Replaceable

In contrast to the international graduate students and the ADA university staff, the adjunct professors understood the spaciotemporal nature (Ballard & Gossett, 2007) of their contingent status. Yet their awareness did not preclude the adjunct professor participants from feeling vulnerable when interacting with their target group, full-time faculty and administrators. The adjunct professors recognized their difference when the target group communicated hierarchical microaggressions, patronization, lack of encouragement to build community, and exclusion from administrative and organizational communication. In addition to the contractual barriers the adjunct professors faced, the administration and faculty socially constructed difference as a barrier to full participation in the target group. When Lori encountered this barrier, she felt she was of little value to the target group, "[A]s an adjunct the reality is that nothing you say or think is considered valid. We are quickly dismissed by administration because we are viewed as being easily expendable and replaceable," Lori observed. The participants' ability to fully participate with their target group was limited by inconsiderate treatment from administrators and faculty, as well as having no job security. Julianna discussed

indifferent communication from administrators and faculty. "I felt dismissed by the course director because it seemed that she thought that we have nothing else to do than to work on her class. Come on," Julianna exclaimed, "Think about it, we are adjuncts; we might have four or five other part-time gigs." By not considering her time as valuable or that she may have other obligations, the course director invalidated Julianna. Frustration with the lack of consideration was echoed by Mariah,

> The hoops that adjuncts have to jump through is insane…Department heads do not return emails, faculty lie to you because they want your help…the second you need their help, they turn their backs on you or preach to you that you need to play the game.

Mariah gave an example, "[T]he faculty who was in charge of scheduling…told me that I had to do what the department chair wanted or else I would lose my health insurance and would also be deemed a 'problem' adjunct." Disrespectful and coercive treatment from the target group, as well as labeling, communicated contempt.

Isolation was not what the participants anticipated when considering their role on campus. Taylor recounted,

> I have never been introduced to the rest of the department. I feel embarrassed to talk to anyone else around the university about being in my department because they say, 'Oh! Do you know so-and-so?' and of course I don't.

Being excluded made Taylor feel that she was not a bona fide group member. The participants were expected to show up, teach, and leave campus to complete their paperwork. Lori explained, "We are not encouraged to interact with one another in a professional or collegial manner, let alone a social one." Being negatively self-conscious, withdrawing, excluded separated the adjunct professors from the target group.

Exclusion from department meetings and conversations left the adjunct professors feeling vulnerable and unprotected. Julianna vented, explaining she is frustrated "when you are the last to know something that directly affects your life." Because knowledge is a form of power (Allen, 2011), being the last to know important information equates to being a member of the team with the least power. This left Julianna feeling a loss of control. Lori conveyed exasperation with her position of vulnerability in her university, "We are not allowed to unionize…so we truly have no voice in the contractual obligations of the college…we have also been stripped of our right to speak up for ourselves due to the dissolution of the Faculty Senate." Having her voice constrained limited Lori's ability to become a bona fide group member. Andrew discussed that not being involved in departmental discussions about strategic positioning "has led to unexpected changes in expectations for some courses I've designed. I've been able to adapt reasonably well, but those adaptions, of course, create their own stress." Having a voice would have prevented stress and frustration for adjunct professors. Exclusion and a lack of knowledge constrained the participants' labor and sense of belonging.

The administration and faculty used the adjunct professors as a resource without allowing them the privileges bona fide group membership affords, thus suspending them to the liminal space of contingent group membership. Each contingent group felt the suspension of contingent group membership in liminality, which affected their identification.

Hesitant Identification

The barriers constructed by the target groups prohibited the participants from full involvement and contribution in their universities. This theme also helps to answer research question two, which asks what messages do contingent group members receive from their target group about their status. While enjoying some of the benefits of membership and partial

inclusion, the contingent group members overall did not experience a sense of belonging, security, or self-efficacy. Collectively each participant group shared experiences where they were stigmatized, marginalized, and isolated,

causing each group to have reservations about fully identifying with their target group. All groups felt conflicted about their respective target groups. Each group could not fully identify due to different reasons: (1) a lack of commonality for outsiders within, (2) a lack of lived experience for those with a courtesy stigma, and (3) a lack of attachment for the contract workers. The participants held a level of hesitant identification for their respective targets group as a means of self-protection.

Outsiders Within: Lack of Commonality

Contingent group membership with the domestic students provided the international graduate students with intercultural experiences, learning opportunities, and a sense of adventure. The outsider within participant group's difference became apparent when the domestic students stereotyped and misunderstood them, when they encountered messages to conform and were not allowed to participate in conversations. Danilo recognized his hesitant identification with the target group. He reflected, "I had to remind myself and/also was indirectly told to remember that I am an international student at the end of the day." Danilo realized that he did not act or sound like American students. He was reminded that he could assimilate to some degree, however his attempts to integrate still revealed he was culturally different. Hahn had a similar response when she journaled, "Maybe I am too sensitive, but it reminded me that I am an international student, who speaks broken English, who 'dropped from the sky' and 'who is that Asian woman'…they all [domestic students] look at me that way." Hahn felt labeled as strange. She was different and she knew it. She resolved, "It is okay, I mean I can handle it. It just really affirms the feeling and

understanding." Both Danilo and Hahn emotionally and psychologically protected themselves by acknowledging their cultural differences, which the target group saw as a lack of commonality.

The international graduate students' target group had different cultural experiences. "There is also the thing with the local sports teams," Danilo explained, "it's hard to be emotionally involved with my peers when it comes to supporting them and that sometimes does make me feel like I am not a part of the group." Danilo recognized that not fully being part of the group prohibited him from fully supporting his peers. As much as he wanted to, Danilo could not identify completely with his domestic peers. Abnik talked about some of the challenges he experienced when attempting to bond with his domestic peers,

> I was unable to make American friends for quite some time because we were so different. Most college students bonded over sports and American sports were a bit foreign to me as we only watched cricket and soccer back in my country. And since my undergraduate education was in the deep South, most people had thick accents and I was unable to understand most people for quite some time which made it much harder to communicate. The food was different too and it took some time to get used to it.

Families and holidays were difficult for the participants to understand and enter into. The target group had unfamiliar traditions, sources of entertainment, and other cultural norms. Talha shared not being able to celebrate his religious holidays,

> [O]ne of my religious festivals was scheduled to take place in mid of the week. So, I received a lot of invitations from different groups to have fun with them…Suddenly from one of my classes I received [a notice] to have an exam scheduled on that day…I ended up studying the whole day and gave the exam in the afternoon…I entirely missed all the religious activities.

Talha could not celebrate his religious holiday in the manner he did in his home country because it was not recognized by his target group. This made him not only sad and homesick, but different from his target group. Billy remembered visiting an American family for the Thanksgiving holiday,

> I went [to] my host family for a Thanksgiving dinner, they were pretty into Christian and the praying. So we prayed for nearly have [*sic*] an hour around the table by sharing thankfulness and stories before actually having dinner. Their kids were like sitting still and not complaining. I can hardly imagine this happening in a Chinese family since children are always naughty and can't wait for food. Then I realize[d]…we do still have a lot in difference.

When Billy evaluated American traditions and family interactions he comprehended the difference of the gathering in the context of religion and how family members interacted. The Thanksgiving tradition was not relatable; he did not have an equivalent experience to relate it to from his home country. For Jaya, her friends' families were confounding. "One of the hardest things to identify with domestic students is their relationship with their parents and their upbringing as a child," she wrote, "there are so many stark differences between the two cultures that sometimes it's hard to tell if its reality or was that a joke." She continued, "I really like that my American friends can be their true self in front of their parents and sometimes I am jealous of that relationship." The awareness that cultural differences divided them from their domestic peers caused the international graduate students to feel as if they could not relate. The realization they were more different than they anticipated caused the international graduate students to feel as if they could not fully identify with their domestic student peers. The perception of being negatively differentiated conflicted with messages of inclusion, causing the international

graduate students to withdraw psychologically from domestic students. This perceived separation interfered with identification with target group.

Courtesy Stigma: Lack of Lived Experience

As an ADA university staff, Megan encountered messages from the target group, students with disabilities, that indicated contingent group membership. The ADA university staff participants were unable to fully identify with their target group because of their ability privilege. The ADA university staff realized they did not have lived experience as disabled; indeed they were privileged by their ability. Each of the participants expressed thoughts about not being able to fully understand the barriers their students with disabilities encounter and a desire to better understand their experiences. Megan encountered the barriers of contingent group status that made her feel self-conscious of her difference. "It's awkward to be an outsider" she explained, "I can listen, learn, and empathize, but that doesn't mean I 'get it' as much as I want to. My privilege sets me apart." Megan's description of being an outsider is significant because she speaks to the communicative barrier contingent group members encounter in the socialization experience. For example, Celeste recognized her position as an outsider to the students with disabilities' obstacles by saying, "I don't have first-hand experience of disability symptoms. While I can empathize…I'm careful to acknowledge that I don't (yet) experience disability-related symptoms." Both Katherine and Jan articulated the limits of their empathy for the students' challenges. Katherine wrote, "I do not know what it is like to have a disability…I do feel that sometimes it puts me at a disadvantage to not know exactly where students are coming from." Katherine's "disadvantage" was not living with a personal experience of disability, thus creating a barrier from fully identifying with members of her target group. Jan reflected, "I can remember sitting down with a visually impaired student. I was trying to get her to describe to me

how well she could see. Her response represents well the obstacle that exists when you don't have the …disability." Jan quoted the student saying, "I can't tell you what I can't see because I don't know what I'm missing, I can only try to describe what I think I can see." The student's response to Jan profoundly represents what it is like to have a courtesy stigma and not fully bearing the mark of the stigma (Goffman, 1963). Jan's student literally could not see, and Jan could not fully *see* the student's experience. Both had to imagine the experience of the other. At some level each party was engaging in perspective taking (Chiu & Yeh, 2018; Longmire & Harrison, 2018), yet perspective taking is not always sufficient to reach full identification. Hence, ADA university staff hesitantly identified with their target group, knowing they could not fully understand the stigma of disability. Stephanie added an element to the differences between the students' lived experience and those of the ADA university staff, "Students have to cope with their disabilities 24 hours a day, every day until the end of time. I have evenings and weekends off from my job." The fact that Stephanie has periods of relief from the disability courtesy stigma and her students do not experience such relief in society positions Stephanie outside of the target group. The ADA university staff recognized being able-bodied limited them full identification with their target group.

The ADA university staff experienced limited access to the students with disabilities due to a lack of insider communication. The diagnosis of a student's disability is confidential, even to the ADA university staff that support them. Students may disclose their disability; however, they are not obligated to do so. Katherine explained that not knowing students' specific challenges can make the work difficult. "Often times it's obvious or a student will disclose it," Katherine wrote, "but other times not and we're left hoping that what we do when working with the students is appropriate and beneficial." Sometimes insider information is limited due to

confidentiality laws; sometimes it is limited due to not understanding communication specific to the group. Matthew remembered a specific event that demonstrated insider communication. Matthew shared, "I was at a conference session where a non-verbal, deaf individual was demonstrating a product that supported deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Everyone else in attendance knew sign language, I did not…I had no idea what was going on." Barriers in communication, be they legal or a lack of understanding, can conceal what is actually occurring inside the target group's experience. This limitation served to constrain the ADA university staff from identifying as bona fide group members. Stacey asked rhetorically, "If the connection you have with the student population is veiled, are you really part of their community's identity?" The ADA university staff participants sensed "veiled" barrier to identification, rendering them with hesitant identification. The lack of fully exchanging information, comprehension, and the lack of lived experience with disability separated the ADA university staff from their target group, students with disabilities.

Contract Workers: Lack of Attachment

As contingent group members, the adjunct professors experienced limited identification with their target group. The administrators and faculty provided the participants with income, autonomy, and connections with students. Even so, the adjunct professor participants felt anxious, defenseless, lonely, and invisible. "It really does feel like I'm less important and utterly forgotten" Taylor reflected. Her difference, as well as the others', became apparent when administrators and faculty were condescending, dismissive, and showed little value for adjunct professors' time, opinions, scholarship, or professional ambitions. Taylor addressed feeling left-out and isolated by the barrier, which dampened her enthusiasm to engage with the target group. She explained, "Because I get left out of things in between semesters, sometimes that makes it

hard to feel loyal and enthusiastic about starting back up again when a new semester begins."

Doing the work without the benefits (e.g., inclusion, opinion, control) of bona fide group

membership left Taylor challenged to feel committed to feel identified with the target group. The

experience of being constrained left Andrew feeling negative about the organization. He shared,

"I don't know that I would want a tenure track position with the university. I still have some

reservations or hesitations or insecurity about engaging with the broader university after some of

my…experiences." Disappointment and a lack of support and commitment from the

administration and faculty left Andrew withholding identification to the target group because he

has some "reservations or hesitations or insecurity."

The adjunct professors expressed feelings about being exploited in their role. Several had

experiences where they were required to perform work without compensation. "We are often

exploited and taken advantage of by being elected to serve on committees, which we have to do

in order to be considered for future full-time positions," Lori explained, "but we aren't

financially compensated for all of these 'opportunities.'" The cost to Lori in this situation was

free labor for the chance to become a group member. Julianna gave an example of a similar

experience, "There was a week before the course started that I nearly spent 40 hours preparing. I

was very angry by this and emailed the professor and asked where we (adjuncts) agreed to do

this excessive work." Julianna continued, "She responded by saying that our work was really

appreciated and that maybe we will be hired again in the future to teach the class." This response

seemed manipulative and intimidating. The sense of not being valued by the target group was

reflected not only in communication, but also in how the participants were compensated. Jamie

put a twist on the demeaning treatment, "[there are] weird unspoken expectations…to pitch in

when we aren't being paid because we should be thankful they have a job." Not only are the

adjunct professors exploited by being required to do work they were not paid for, but they were also expected to be grateful for the opportunity. The adjunct professor participants sensed this exclusion and exploitation or communication barriers. The lack of connection, support, and a sense of being valued separated the adjunct professors from their target group, leading to hesitant identification.

The participants from all groups held varying degrees of indecision or reluctance about identifying with their target groups. Initially, participants desired to fully identify with the anticipated role, department, and university. However, after experiencing the shock of the stigma messages, the participants were cautious in their desires and reassessed their levels of identification. They disidentified with the unanticipated contingencies and limitations they received. The participants wanted to be identified yet had hesitations and reservations about the target group, causing the contingent members to experience hesitant identification.

Summary

The participants experience of hesitant identification, a state where they could not bring themselves to fully identify with their target groups, as much as they might want to. The contingent group members could not fully identify with their target groups out of a sense of self-protection from undignified treatment. The communicative barriers constrained contingent group members' access to group solidarity, emotional connection with target group members, and emotional and psychological protection that bona fide group membership provides. The international graduate students lacked commonality with domestic student peers, which rendered them in a state of hesitant identification. The ADA university staff lacked lived experience with disability, which barred identification with

the students they serve. The adjunct professors experienced a lack of commitment and attachment from their target group. As much as the participants initially wanted to identify with their target groups, each group expressed withholding, skepticism, and hesitation based on their treatment and interactions with target group members. The participants did not feel connection or support from their target group, making full identification untenable.

Negotiating the barriers to bona fide group membership is part of the lived experience of contingent group members. The participants' journals documented ways they strategically used communication to manage their liminal status in order to function in the context of their target groups, which is addressed in the next theme.

Communicative Strategies

Contingent group members strategically use communication to avoid being negatively distinctive, ridiculed, misunderstood, isolated, and exposed, among other undesirable experiences and emotions (Meisenbach 2010; Orbe, 1998). This theme answers research question four, which asks how contingent group members use communication to navigate their liminal status. The participants used a range of tactics to manage the stigmatizing and separating messages they received. The international graduate students used quietness and faked understanding as strategies to avoid and protect from feeling cautious, defensive, and lonely. The ADA university staff used powering up, logic, and rapport building to manage two groups; the administration and faculty, as well as the students they served. The ADA university staff also used these strategies to avoid negative emotions, such as feeling disrespected, unsupported, and discouraged. The adjunct professors used physical distancing, withdrawal, and reframing as a

means to cope with the target group's stigma messages and avoid feeling invisible, powerless, and unvalued. Each group's communication strategies are reviewed below.

Outsiders Within: Quietness and Faked Understanding

Being quiet, agreeable bystanders helped the international graduate students to avoid controversy and protected them from situations where they felt awkward, singled out, or misunderstood. Esme employed this nonassertive assimilation communicative strategy (Orbe, 1998) when she said, "I'd rather be quiet than say something and people ask me did you mean this or that. They're not doing anything wrong. It just makes me uncomfortable and nervous." She continued, "Many times, when in a meeting of grad class, I know the answer of a question, I just prefer not to talk. What if people don't understand what I meant. I just prefer to stay quiet." Esme disengaged from communicating to avoid embarrassment or unwanted attention. Stacia also chose to keep quiet when in groups of domestic students. She journaled,

> [E]ven when not talking about research and work, I felt like between me and my peers our life experiences were quite different, and it was hard to find common ground and relatable things to talk about. It was hard to talk about much beyond media, entertainment, and food. I ended up not going to many social events with the department, and I talked little at the ones I did attend.

Additionally, she used disassociation and strategic distancing as a communication management strategy. Like Esme and Stacia, Suvarna practiced silence within the target group, but also faked understanding of conversations as a communicative strategy. "When we talk as a group sometimes, I don't even understand what they're talking about," she admitted. Suvarna added, "I fake that I get it. But I didn't. Therefore, I prefer to be silent...It makes me more being isolated and lonely. This continues to be a struggle that I have even today after 6 years of being in the

U.S." Suvarna's extended use of communicative strategies to navigate interaction with the target group speaks to her continued status as a contingent group member.

Hanh was conflicted about quietness. She shared she had difficulties fully engaging in class discussions because in her home culture, quietness is considered proper,

> I do not want people paying attention to my identity as an international student…It is important here in the States, the ability to be able to speak about things, contribute to that, and critic that, too. I think there is a culture thing of not having to speak those ways…I cannot let culture to be my excuse, however, it has just a little to do with my international identity…It was the way I was taught.

For Hanh, quietness was both a communication strategy for not bringing attention to her status as an international student and a cultural norm from her home country. She felt the pressure to contribute, however using quietness minimized her cultural difference with her target group and felt more familiar to her from her own cultural context.

Contract Workers: Physical Distancing, Withdrawal, and Reframing

Adjunct professors also used physical distancing as a nonverbal communicative strategy. Because the adjunct professors were not welcomed to challenge processes, provide feedback, or voice frustration, some participants withdrew by physically distancing themselves from the target group and projecting themselves from the resulting negative emotions of feeling unwelcome, excluded, and unvalued. That is what Don did. He avoided encountering administrators and full-time faculty. He said, "I would go out of my way to avoid them." Don did not want to feel the sting of stigma and he protected himself by not attending gatherings and department events. When Bailey did not receive the support she needed to pursue her research, she said she was "shut down" by the professor's response. She withdrew and has not attempted to pursue her

research goals since then.

Yet another strategy used by the participants was to reframe (Meisenbach, 2010) their contingent group status as a choice for freedom and independence, rather than a restriction. This helped the participants to feel empowered and in control. For Jamie, being left alone was "…somewhat nice that no one cares what I do or don't do." Bailey journaled she heard a nickname for adjuncts as 'freeway fliers.' This moniker references the adjunct professors' commute going from one school to another. She liked the freedom her contract status provides. "I get to switch things up in the week by going to different campuses." Bailey added the freedom to accept or reject a teaching job as another way she experiences independence. Bailey disclosed, "When there was a chair or admin. I didn't feel like had the best interest of students or adjuncts in mind, I would distance myself from the campus and not accept an assignment." The ADA university staff used strategies that were unique from the communication strategies the international graduate students and the adjunct professors used.

Courtesy Stigma: Powering Up, Logic, and Rapport Building

The ADA university staff communicative strategies were used to manage two different groups; one with social status and power, the other that is stigmatized and marginalized. When Celeste encountered resistance from faculty, the strategy she used is interpreted as powering up. This strategy helped the participants to feel supported and empowered. Celeste recounted an example when a professor "simply had no respect for me, my office, our role, or our students…I had to go to my boss, who then had to go to the Dean of Students to get compliance." Kandace discussed powering up by establishing networks and relationships with non-stigmatized programs in the university. She explained, we "develop[ed] relationships with other offices and staff members. For example, we have several student athletes who qualify for accommodations,

so we've worked to build a partnership with Athletics. We have a liaison who works between their office and ours." The strategy of working with another student program in itself is important, but the example provided by Kandace was a strategic move because of the program's social status and power. The athletics program on Kandace's campus is considered prestigious and desirable. Having endorsement and affiliation with a program that is esteemed by administrators, faculty, and students was a move to gain access and influence with faculty and administrators. Matthew's office has worked to challenge the administration and faculty's perception of his team. He shared, "[We] actively and warmly supported the faculty, and many of them have changed their minds…they are beginning to see disability as diversity." The strategies used by Matthew, as well as by Celeste and Kandace, focus on employing strategic communication, engaging in intergroup networking, and educating others.

The shift from ensuring students' success in elementary school and high school, to removing barriers to equal opportunities in education, is a source of frustration for university students with disabilities. Stacey found communicating logic with students with disabilities helped her because "students are less likely to be dismissive of you if you can properly explain the process and the reasoning behind it to show, although this process is personal to the student, the decisions we make are logical determinations." Jordana used this strategy as well as a means to manage her own frustration and to feel she is providing services based on policy. She reasoned, "When we allow empathy to control our decision-making, we engage in aspects of the pity model of disability where we assume the only way these students can be successful is if we overaccommodate and provide them with an advantage." Katherine extended the strategy to include why this strategy is necessary, explaining,

[We] try to pass on…personal responsibility, natural consequences, etc…I want to help

them [students with disabilities] learn to be responsible, I want to hold them to a set of

expectations and let them face the consequences if they don't.

Stacey and Katherine used communication to strategically avert controversy with the students

they serve. Educating and empowering the students helped them to understand the ADA access

Figure 5

Tightrope Performance

Note. Jordana's communication is a balancing act

and accommodation processes. Knowledge of the processes shifted the focus of the student

requests and allowed the students to experience the outcomes of their choices. Jordana likens this

communicative strategy to that of a "tightrope performance between legal compliance and

supporting the individual. How do we not get sued, and then what does the student want?" As an

ADA university staff, Jordana balances assisting students with removal of academic barriers

while keeping within the limits of the law to prevent unfair advantages. She shared the Tightrope

Performance image (Figure 5) to illustrate work to balance between ADA law with student

requests. Jordana felt like her communication between faculty and students walked a fine line,

like tightrope walking balancing civil rights with academic equity. This balance helps the ADA university staff, as well as the students they serve, to feel secure and connected. Bridging was another communicative strategy most ADA university staff used to manage contingent status. Naomi explored the ways she used bridging to manage being a contingent member of her target group.

> Students know that I will be there for them and be the safe landing place when they do not know where else to turn. I then help to 'bridge the gap' between their experiences and the supports that they need. This may look like bridging a communication gap between what a student needs in a classroom setting and what a professor is providing. This may also look like bridging the gap between what has 'always been done' to exploring new possibilities of how it could now be done. In order for the bridge to have a solid base on both sides, there must be trust and rapport built.

Jan does her best to establish "trust and rapport" between students and faculty. Jan explained, "I try to do activities that put me at a similar disadvantage so I can begin to understand what the other person is experiencing." Jan's exemplar reflects her willingness to feel vulnerable and constrained in order related to her students. Having a mind-set of mutual trust and understanding helps her to engage in meaningful conversations and build fulfilling relationships. Overall, a sense of emotion motivated the use of various communication strategies across the three different type of contingent group members. Each of the communication practices used by the contingent group members influenced their sense of belonging, which is addressed in the next theme.

The Paradox of (not) Belonging

The liminal space of contingent group membership is a strange place where individuals belong, yet do not belong. Considering their legitimate inclusion in their target groups, as well as a range of messages from the inclusive to the stigmatizing, participants' experiences were conflicting and confusing. The participants experienced a paradox, which is a "contradiction that is usually surprising, ironic, unintended, contrary to expectations, and unsettling" (Stohl & Cheney, 2001, p. 355). The ambiguity of no longer being a newcomer, yet being inhibited from transitioning to the metamorphosis phase of socialization (Jablin, 1987, 2001) as a bona fide group insider left participants wondering whether or not they belonged. This theme answers research question one, which asks how do contingent group members experience a sense of belonging to their target group.

The participants used metaphors to describe their paradoxical contingent group experiences. Their imagery illustrates the unsettled feelings of (not) belonging. Melissa compared her adjunct professor experiences to being in a dream. She explained,

> "the dream takes place in a familiar place with familiar people, but when people speak to you, they speak in a language you don't understand. The contours and functions of the job were familiar…but I wasn't completely sure how to get all the information I needed, or how to even ask the right questions."

Melissa used a photo of a home to further explain her experience. In Figure 6 she explains, "[this is] a photo of the house we are buying. I can see it in my mind, but it isn't really mine, and even though I've seen it in person, it still feels a bit like unfamiliar territory." Her house is technically hers, but it is not *really hers* because she has not lived in it yet, has not hung pictures, filled closets, or painted walls. The imagery in her metaphor and photograph both exemplify limited access to insider knowledge by the use of "not understanding the language" and "unfamiliar

Figure 6

House We're Buying

Note. Melissa's house she and her husband are buying. It's still unfamiliar since they have not

moved in yet.

territory." Being unsure how to get information and not knowing the right questions to ask point

to communicative barriers. Melissa demonstrated being conflicted in her job experience with the

use of "familiar" and "wasn't completely sure." Her dream metaphor and house buying image

exemplifies the paradox of (not) belonging.

"I am a sailboat in the ocean" declared Megan. The liminal qualities of Melissa's imagery

were also present in Megan's ocean metaphor for her experience as an ADA university staff.

Sometimes the ocean is calm, and I drift along. Sometimes the ocean is chopping with

demands, and I get a bit waterlogged. Sometimes the wind is enough to move me along,

and sometimes I need to turn on the motor (caffeine). Sometimes I sail or dock with other

boats, and sometimes I go alone. I keep having to readjust and repair my tack as I learn

new things and encounter new challenges. I carry some old, stinky cargo from previous

jobs and other experiences. I dump it when I can. I pick up fresh, helpful cargo with

support from my coworkers. I dock and refuel, but the ocean never ends. The ocean and

the sky look a bit different every day, and even when it seems like they're fighting against

me, I can see the beauty in them.

Megan's metaphor for her contingent group member experience included both loneliness, when

she said, "going alone" and comradery, when she addresses "support from my coworkers."

Megan reflects the struggle of her experience with the words "choppy," "waterlogged," "stinky

cargo," and "fighting." In the end, Megan described the paradox of her experience as

unpredictable and challenging, as well as beautiful.

Ocean imagery was used by Suvarna as well. However, her likening had a darker tone,

"Depression is like being stuck in the depths of an ocean." Suvarna's ocean was overwhelming

and lonely. After stating her metaphor, she explained how stress and loneliness drove her to

alcohol.

Stacia's metaphor illustrates the conflict between the target group's (i.e., domestic

students) need for conformity and the lack of interest in the richness of her identity as an

international graduate student.

I am a seed blown by the wind from a distant land onto the foreign soil here…The seed

has taken root and become a flower. Close-minded people would be annoyed if their

uniform, perfectly landscaped garden suddenly spouted an irregular flower. However, to

curious and open people, having me around is richness.

Stacia's windblown seed sprouting into a flower is a sentiment of personal growth and value.

However, she articulates the disruption to homogeneity her presence can evoke in the target

group. Melissa, Megan, Suvarna, and Stacia all used metaphors with aimless movement. A

dream-state, drifting and bobbing in the depths of the ocean, and blown by the wind all reflect

the aimlessness of liminality, an in-between state of (not) belonging. The imagery from participants representing all the contingent groups lacks stability and a trajectory.

Figure 7

Safari Park

Note. Wang's picture reflects a sense of (not) belonging.

A sense of outside observation is portrayed in Wang's metaphor. He reflected on his experience as an international graduate student as well,

> International students are like visitors to a safari park. A visitor may be able to observe
>
> what's in a safari park, animals, the ecosystem, plants, etc. However, they are not
>
> essentially part of the wildlife discourse. They are not part of the safari. They can, to
>
> some extent, try to engage with the wild animals as much as they can, and they can even
>
> try to live in the park for a few days or months. But they don't belong there.

Not being part of the "wildlife discourse" with limited access to insider knowledge and a denial of communicative opportunities, separated Wang from his domestic peers because he did not "belong there." Yet, he was able to observe "like visitors of a safari." Wang used the Safari Park image (Figure 7) to illustrate the encapsuled perspective of his international graduate student

experience that allows close viewing, but not true interaction. Both he and Stacia experienced cultural difference, which keeps them in a paradox of (not) belonging.

Julianna reflected on her feelings about being an adjunct professor and noted they fluctuate over the school year. For instance, Julianna's schedule, job security, stress levels, and overall emotions were like "being on a roller coaster." She described the "roller coaster" cycle that happens when she anticipates her next contract, "I get really stressed/worried that I won't have a spot the next semester. That feeling goes away the second I get an email asking me if I can teach the following semester. I then feel so happy and carefree." She faced extremes in many facets of her group experience due to the precarity of her employment status.

Jaya also used the metaphor of a "roller coaster of emotions" to describe her experience as an international graduate student.

> The adjustment to being an international student was hard because one moment I was lonely and missing my home and the other I was meeting new people and getting excited about the prospects…This constant pull and push between my new life and my old life was hard to deal with.

Jaya said this emotional state is as relevant now as it was when she arrived in the U.S. from Mumbai five years ago. A continuous state of a "rollercoaster of emotions" indicates not being settled with a sense of belonging. Roller coasters used in Jaya's and Julianna's metaphors indicate movement as well, but also precarity and unpredictability. Hahn's metaphor of a trek also shows movement and unpredictability.

Hahn used a trekking trail for her metaphor of being an international graduate student.

> It [is] similar to trekking trail to Fansipan, the highest mountain in the Indochine peninsula. It [is] not that hard [or] dangerous but asks you to keep climbing and climbing.

You can choose to stop and go back, but you [are] curious about what is on the peak of the mountain. You keep climb[ing] and you get over some of the lower mountain peaks…you thought you almost arrived, but no, you will see a pass. Going down the pass is easy and relax[ing]. [B]ut then you see another pass, which asks you to climb up to the next mountain peak. After I don't know how many ups and downs, you get to be an

Figure 8

Trekking Trail Down

Note. Hahn's photo of a trekking trail.

international student. And you keep climbing the similar up and down rhythm. While you [are] doing that, many people keep telling you that you are crazy, it is not necessary, you just need to stay in the delta area and relax, some others [are] telling you that you were high enough, go down to be safe. Some people laugh at you because you are too ambitious, you should not be [because you are] a woman. Some others do not believe that you can do it. Some others do not care, what you have done was just meaningless. Some people told you that you [are] good, try it. But then, because too many people told you

that the journey is not a good thing and useless, you do not believe in encouragement

anymore. You keep doing it because you think that is what you do. It is only you with

you.

The peaks and passes of Hahn's trekking trail are much like the ups and downs of Julianna's and

Jaya's "rollercoaster of emotions." Hahn talked about the messages she heard along the way. In

the end, she was alone. She continued because of her own resolve.

Andrew metaphorically compared his role as an adjunct professor to that of an electron.

He said, "I am an electron in a middle orbit around an atom. My presence is meaningful and

significant but does not change the essential nature of the atom itself." Using the example of an

electron speaks to Andrew's limited ability to cooperatively influence his target group. Andrew's

metaphor reflects being part of a system. He does the work and makes an impact, yet in his role

he is not able to oblige the target group to adapt or change.

Don's metaphor also reflects he is part of a larger system by using a sports metaphor to

illustrate his adjunct professor experience. In it he saw his role as a "baseball relief pitcher."

I became the 'go to' person whenever the department needed someone to take on classes

that faculty couldn't teach…I rarely turned down any of these opportunities. I appreciated

being chosen in these moments. I was brought in at the last minute to help 'rescue'

courses and get them in order in the nick of time…It felt good to be needed in the

department. There were drawbacks—the unpredictability, the inconsistency, and the

realization that it might all be over at the end of a semester. I felt like I was in a liminal

space.

Indeed, he was in a liminal space, the liminal space of contingent group membership.

Many metaphors used by participants, regardless of the type of contingent group membership, have a pensive, ethereal essence. The illustrations evoke a sense of movement by way of a boat navigating a sometimes calm, sometimes choppy ocean, a roller-coaster moving up and then down, a seed blowing in the wind and becoming a flower, peaks and passes in a mountain range, as well as an electron in orbit. The language representing these experiences captures the paradox and contradictory essence of this lived experience; for example, up vs. down, stressed vs. carefree, and calm vs. choppy. There is also a sense of having value, but not being fully esteemed. For instance, being a meaningful group member but not essential, causing irritation yet offering richness, and being called upon only for relief rather than being a fulltime pitcher on a baseball team. The wildlife discourse and unknown language, as well as uncertainty about how to ask questions and how to access information, speak to the communicative barriers the participants encountered as a contingent group member. Such communication maintained their liminality.

Summary

The participant stories of how they developed expectations for joining their target groups showed different pathways to entering their roles. However, each participant expressed actualization of their positive expectations and ways they were affirmed in their group role. What the participants did not anticipate were shocking stigmatizing messages from their target groups. The negative communication was not only shocking, dismaying, and hurtful, they separated the participants from their target group. The participants learned they were allowed in the target group, but conditionally limited from bona fide group membership based on their difference, association with a stigmatized population, or contingent position in the organization. These barriers were socially constructed by the target group communicating stigmatization,

marginalization, and organizational isolation. The conflicting messages resulted in dignity injuries for the participants and prohibited full identification with their target groups, ultimately fostering hesitant identification. Each of the participant groups strategically used communication to manage their contingent group membership. Their communication strategies had both social benefits and costs to study participants. The ambiguity of a stalled transition from new group member to full group member left the participants in a state of instability. The conflicting messages from the target groups of inclusion and exclusion created a sense of suspension in liminal space with boundaries that could not be seen, only felt. The paradox of (not) belonging left contingent group members performing their respective roles, but without the security and identification that often comes with bona fide group membership. The contributions and implications of these findings are addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The aim of this research is to identify the common experience of organizational members who are in the liminal space of contingent group membership. The objective of this research is to expand the organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) by exploring the complexities of contingent group membership. This study's objective was achieved by phenomenologically researching the common socialization experience shared by three university contingent membership groups: international students, ADA accessibility and accommodation university staff (ADA university staff), and adjunct professors.

In this study, none of the participants were aware of their negative distinctiveness at the encounter phase of socialization (Jablin, 1989, 2001). The more privileged groups within the organizations were not only aware of the participants' differences, but set the limitations and constraints to their contingent membership. When the participants entered the groups, the full members messaged the participants by way of stigma communication. Examining the journals of the three contingent groups revealed the common experience of unanticipated stigmatization, or stigma shock, and the emotional cost of contingent group membership.

This study both theoretically explores and provides empirical evidence for the lived experienced of contingent group membership. Examining the written accounts of international students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors as contingent group members reveals a new understanding of the common socialization experiences of outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers both respectively and comparatively. The analysis answers each of the research questions, which are reviewed below.

Research Questions

The first two themes address research questions one and two. The first research question asked, how do contingent group members experience a sense of belonging to their target group. The second research question asked, what messages contingent group members receive from their target group about their status. The first two themes are: Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry and Stigma Shock. The theme Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry documents the experiences where contingent group members receive affirming, appreciative, and acknowledging messages from their target groups. These messages initially signaled a level of inclusion and belonging. Thus, the three contingent groups had expectations that were to some extent fulfilled by partial inclusion in the target group. They also experienced positive emotions from the initial inclusive messages received from their respective target groups. The theme of Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry confirms what the literature has established regarding benefits to the contingent group members that non-group members typically do not experience. For example, being considered an honorary member of a dominant group (Collins, 1986, 1999), being a female professional in a male-dominated profession (Wallace & May, 2012) or being an older employee in a young workforce (Posthuma & Campion, 2009) all demonstrate benefits. However, the target groups simultaneously sent messages that communicated barriers to bona fide group membership. The limiting communication barriers came in the form of stigma messages.

The second theme, Stigma Shock, provides examples of stigma messages from target groups that set conditions and limitations establishing contingency. The findings in this theme also confirm the literature that identifies the communicative boundaries that constrain contingent members. For example, immigrant status of professionals in the workplace (Shenoy-Packer, 2014), cultural differences (Suno, 2019), and first-generation college student status in

universities (Gist-Mackey et al., 2018), and providing services or care to the stigmatized (White & Gilstrap, 2017) all stigmatized group. The participants from all three groups articulated experiences where they clearly received messages that reminded them of their stigmatized status and the conditions and limitations placed on their role. The surprising result of the Stigma Shock theme is that none of the participants anticipated being stigmatized when they began the encounter phase of socialization (Jablin, 1987, 2001). All three groups were surprised, dismayed, and hurt by the messages that communicated stigmatization, marginalization, and organizational isolation. In response to the second research question, contingent group members received messages (often unanticipated and stigmatizing) from the target group that their status is provisionally welcomed without expectation of full membership.

The third research question asked how contingent group members experience their liminal status, which is discussed in the themes Suspended in Liminality and Hesitant Identification. In the theme Suspended in Liminality, participants experienced limited power and restricted authority, constraining them to the liminal space of contingent group membership. Being constrained to the liminal space of contingent group membership prohibited feelings of group solidarity, emotional connection with members, and the psychological protection bona fide membership often provides. The outsiders within, international graduate students, experienced liminality as being quiet observers, causing them to feel self-conscious and guarded. Those who had a courtesy stigma, ADA university staff, experienced liminality as being misunderstood by those they work for, as well as by those they serve, causing them to feel the need to define and defend their work. The contract workers, adjunct professors, experienced liminality by being told to just do their job, causing them to feel isolated, exploited, and vulnerable. The target groups' communication often left participants confused. Being a contingent member of the group

fostered a sense of pride, satisfaction, and accomplishment. However, the conflicting stigma messages resulted in dejection, loneliness, and insecurity.

The contradictory experiences of contingent group membership were manifest in their identity and identification, which are addressed in the theme Hesitant Identification. The negative messages limited participants' ability and desire for identification with their respective target groups. This theme, Hesitant Identification, contributes to the literature on ambivalent identification, when individuals identify with some beliefs or values of the organization and disidentify with others (Dukerich et al., 1998; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), and underidentification, when individuals identify slightly or not at all with an organization (Dukerich et al., 1998; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). This theme also confirms the literature pertaining to outsiders within (Collins, 1986, 1999; Orbe, 1998), those with a courtesy stigma (Goffman, 1963; Ostman & Kjellin, 2002; Smith, 2012), and contract workers (Chambel et al., 2016; Gossett, 2002, 2006; Kreshpaj et al., 2020; Petriglieri et al., 2018) who experience limited security and authority within their target groups. In sum, contingent group members experience liminal status as receiving some conditional benefits from the target group that come with the emotional costs and dignity injuries.

The fourth research question asked, how contingent group members use communication to navigate their liminal status. This fourth research question is addressed in the theme Communication Strategies. The participants relate how they use communication to strategically avoid being negatively distinctive, ridiculed, misunderstood, isolated, exposed, among other undesirable experiences (Meisenbach, 2010; Orbe, 1998; Smith, 2007). Each type of contingent group membership used unique communication strategies to navigate their liminality. The outsiders within (Orbe, 1998), international graduate students, often acquiesce to being quiet and

agreeable bystanders. In addition, international graduate students also disassociate and distance themselves from domestic students in order to mitigate feeling awkward, singled out, or misunderstood. By silencing their voices and withdrawing, the outsider within participants literally do not have a voice in their target group. Those with a courtesy stigma (Meisenbach, 2010), the ADA university staff, use communication strategically to mitigate feeling misunderstood, as well as to defend and define their roles. They employed communication to lessen the constant tension between the dominant (i.e., faculty and administration) and stigmatized groups (i.e., students with disabilities). The contract staff, adjunct professors, use communication to withdraw and physically distance themselves from the target group as a means of protection. Adjunct professors also use communication to reframe their experience (Gossett, 2002; Petriglieri et al., 2018) as a choice, rather than a restriction. Collectively, participant experiences describe the use of the communication strategies as stressful and isolating. To answer the third research question, contingent group members use verbal and nonverbal communication to strategically manage the negative messages of their liminal status.

The first research question asked how contingent group members experience a sense of belonging to their target group. The first research question is answered in the final theme, the Paradox of (not) Belonging. In this study the participants collectively expressed their experience using metaphors and photographic images. Metaphors are especially effective because they can help individuals to express subconscious or difficult aspects of an experience or situation (Marshak, 1996: Tracy et al., 2006). Using metaphors to explain an organizational experience is powerful because metaphors help to reveal "the hidden, paradoxical, irrational, and often absurd aspects of everyday organizational life" (Örtenblad et al., 2016, p. 879). For example, using the metaphor of the ocean, the wind, or a rollercoaster reflect the aimlessness of liminality. Being on

safari in a wildlife park evokes a sense of being an observer who is able to experience at a distance, but not as a real member. The up-down motion of the rollercoaster, bobbing on the ocean, the endless peaks and valleys of a trekking trail exemplify the range of emotions felt by contingent group members. The electron and relief baseball pitcher demonstrate being part of a system, but not an integral piece that is effective in its role to influence, change, or challenge the organization.

The ambiguity of a stalled transition from new group member to bona fide group member left participants in a perpetual state of precarity. In essence, contingent group members never meet the metamorphosis phase of socialization (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010). The messages from the target groups established conditional inclusion, and thus partial exclusion, which created a liminal space marked by boundaries that could not be seen, only felt during social interaction. Many contingent group members are denied an important sense of belonging and confidence in their standing as a group member. The feelings of (not) belonging left participants performing their group roles, but without the rewards of security and autonomy, which is inherently part of bona fide group membership. To answer this final research question, contingent group members have a conflicted sense of (not) belonging to their target group. Contingent group members are no longer newcomers yet are constrained from becoming bona fide group members due the liminality of contingent group membership.

Intersection of Privilege and Marginality

Individuals hold simultaneous sources of identity that are situated and conditional. In this study, the participants experienced an intersection of privilege and marginality as sources of identity. Each of the participant groups experienced privilege in unique ways. The fact that all either attended or held employment at an institution of higher education is a privilege in itself.

The international graduate students attend school in the U.S. without the benefit of financial aid or student employment. They must have means to pay for their education, living expenses, and travel. Status as upper- and middle-class students is a financial privilege. The ADA university staff have the privilege of employment with benefits that may include medical insurance, retirement plans, tuition waivers, promotional opportunities, and numerous other employer provided advantages. The adjunct professors enjoy the privilege of graduate level education, including credentials at the doctorate and other professional levels. These sources of privileged identity intersected with the participants' contingent group status in ways that influenced their experiences as contingent group members. Thus, the marginality they experienced as contingent group members is mutually constituted by their experiences of privilege.

External Factors

This study was conducted during a global pandemic. Universities across the world were in a time of upheaval, affecting every level of the organization. Each of the participant groups was uniquely influenced by the global pandemic. Specifically, during the data collection, international graduate students faced possible deportation to their home countries due to federal and university policy decisions. This was an uncertain and scary time for them. The ADA university staff experienced an influx of students requiring accommodation and access due to abrupt shifts in remote learning, as well as health vulnerabilities. The ADA teams were overwhelmed with requests and did not have adequate staffing levels to provide service. Due to campus closures and reduced student numbers, many adjunct professors did not have classes to teach. Many universities and community colleges placed an indefinite moratorium on hiring contract staff. Hence, it is important to note the stress and uncertainty of the time influenced the

data collection for the present research, as well as influenced the journal entries of the participants.

In addition to the pandemic, this study was conducted during a time of great social unrest in the United States. International conversations about racism and injustice, such as the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-Asian violence, were occurring. While these conversations and events validated and confirmed the need for researching group members who experience (not) belonging, the attention of many participants was focused on these pressing and salient external events, which likely influenced participant journal entries.

Contributions to Literature

The concepts of outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers have been explored in a new way with this research. The finding of similar experiences for contingent group members confined to a liminal space contributes to various bodies of literature. That literature includes outsiders within, those with a courtesy stigma, contract workers, dignity, and contingent group membership.

Contingent Group Membership

This research contributes to the literature on contingent group membership by empirically exploring the similarities and differences in the experiences of different types of contingent group members. This research brings outsiders within (Collins, 1986, 1999; Orbe, 1998), those with a courtesy stigma (Goffman, 1963; Mehta & Farina, 1988; Ostman & Kjellin, 2002), and contract workers (Ballard & Gossett, 2007; George & Chattopadhyay, 2016; Gossett, 2002, 2006; Kreshpaj et al., 2020; Petriglieri et al., 2018) into one comparative analysis. The evidence in this study reveals that the seemingly disparate experiences of outsiders within, those with a courtesy stigma, and contract workers are relatively similar. The experiences of the three groups

are parallel in the following ways: (1) all anticipated full membership based in legitimacy, (2) all were shocked at the unanticipated stigma messages, (3) all were consigned to liminality, (4) each employed communication strategies to navigate liminal status, (5) all experienced hesitation to fully identify with their respective target groups, and (6) every individual questioned whether they belonged to their target group. Each of the contingent groups received some benefits of the target group, yet faced insecurity, loss of autonomy, and accrued emotional costs. Yet despite their commonalities in experience, there were also differences.

This research contributes to the literature on contingent group membership by bringing to the forefront the ways members use communication differently to manage their group status. The international graduate students resorted to being bystanders while in the context of their target group (Orbe, 1998). They used quietness and faked understanding as a form of withdrawing inward as a strategy to avoid and protect themselves from feeling negatively distinctive. The adjunct professors also withdrew, but even more than the international graduate students. They used physical distancing to avoid administrators and other faculty when they were reminded of their contract status. They also used self-talk in the form of reframing (Meisenbach, 2010; Petriglieri et al., 2018) their status as choice for freedom or they denigrated (Petriglieri et al., 2018) the target group as a means to cope with stigma messages. Different from the two other groups, the ADA university staff did not use withdrawal or distance as a strategy. Rather they used powering up as a strategy to influence and educate the group that stigmatized the group of students they served and who, in turn, stigmatized them. The ADA university staff used logic and rapport building while in the context of their target group because they did not have the lived experience of having a disability firsthand.

Finally, this research contributes to the literature on contingent group membership by offering a common conceptual language for communication scholars to use when they discuss the phenomena of contingent group membership. With this research I define contingent group membership as a status or type of group membership that exists within a liminal space of identification where members simultaneously belong, yet do not belong to a target social group. This definition of the liminal space of contingent group membership builds on Goffman's (1963) characterization of contingency membership as a restricted and provisional group membership. It does so by incorporating Ballard and Gossett's (2007) spatiotemporal concept of contingent members and Turner's (1974) notion of liminality as a temporal, in-between space. This new definition is helpful in that it names and identifies the lived experience some group members have when they are prohibited from transitioning to bona fide group members in the organizational assimilation process. Prior definitions limited this experience to contract or temporary workers. However, as the findings reveal, group members that are prohibited from progressing to full group due to difference or being associated with others with difference, experience similar group membership outcomes. Offering a new vernacular for understanding contingent group member assimilation may help researchers and practitioners to discover new ways to construct messages and forge alternative bonds with groups.

Dignity

This research contributes to the literature on dignity by demonstrating how contingent group status is constrained by stigma messages that threaten the dignity of contingent group members. Dignity is the framework for feeling welcomed, valued, and secure. An individual's dignity is grounded in social position (Lucas, 2015). It is based in a sense of worth, value within the group, recognition, admiration, and trust. Dignity is fundamental to personal well-being and

is essential to organizational health. Dignity in the workplace is affirmed or denied by communicative interactions between group members. Members in organizations that treat individuals with dignity are careful not to exploit and abuse power. The participants in this project perceived target group members' denial of their inherent, earned, and/or remediated dignity (un)intentionally through disrespectful interaction (Lucas, 2015).

The data in the study journals portrays experiences where the target groups denied the participants inherent dignity in the form of microaggressions (Shenoy-Packer, 2014; Orbe, 1998). For example, dignity was denied by reminders of cultural difference (Orbe, 1998), by bringing attention to low hierarchical status (Young et al., 2015); by showing a lack of interest in the individuals (Smith, 2007), by negative labeling (Allen, 2011), and by exclusion from conversations and meetings (Mapes, 2019), and more. Participants journaled they were denied earned dignity by the target group in the form of criticism. For example, participants felt criticized for speaking differently or distinctively, challenges to authority or position (Shenoy-Packer, 2014; Young et al., 2015), and judgments via being labeled a failure. Participants felt target groups denied them remediated dignity in the form of exclusion. For example, participants were left out of departmental meetings (Mapes, 2019), denied insider knowledge, and excluded from professional and social relationships (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). The contingent group members continually wondered if they belonged because they were reminded by the target group of their contingent social status. The contingent group members had a sense of being second-rate citizens (Orbe, 1998) through stigmatization, marginalization, negative micro-level interactions, and organizational isolation by the dominant group. These negative experiences threatened the contingent group members' sense of belongingness, esteem, meaningful existence, and sense of control (Sias, 2009).

Theoretical Contributions

      This research contributes to communication theories on organizational assimilation, identity, and identification. The common lived experiences of the participants from all three groups reveal contingent group membership impedes members' ability to fully embrace the benefits of group membership, specifically identity and identification.

Organizational Assimilation Model

      The complexities of member role and organizational assimilation have been explored, challenged, and expanded with the findings of this research. This study contributes to the organizational assimilation literature (e.g., Hoffner, 2006; Jablin 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010; Levine & Hoffner, 2006; Powers & Myers, 2017; S'lebarska et al., 2019) by providing a better understanding of the experiences of group members who simultaneously belong, yet do not belong to a target social group. This project examined the assimilation and communication processes of organizations where metamorphosis (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) is denied by communicatively barricading members in a liminal space. In this space, members are placed in a holding pattern or are suspended in liminality, without the possibility of bona fide group membership. The findings reveal a unique assimilation pathway that diverges from the traditional organizational assimilation model (Jablin, 1987, 2001). The organizational assimilation pathway for contingent group members is unique because individuals acquire the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes of a group to which they are denied bona fide group membership. The findings of this research help to broaden our knowledge of organizational assimilation and adds complexity to our understanding of how individuals enter, take part in, and leave organizations without ever achieving metamorphosis.

Identity and Identification

In this study, the participants legitimately joined their target groups by way of student status, administrative staff position, and contract employment. In the theme Role Anticipation and Target Group Entry, the participants established expectations of their new group role (Jablin, 1987, 2001; Kramer, 2010) and developed perceptions of membership through social interaction (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hecht et al., 2005; Jackson, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Their group membership was legitimate; however, their membership was constrained to liminality by the bona fide group members.

Bona fide groups predetermined a separation of the participants based on social categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The group enacted contingencies and limitations based on intergroup difference, stereotype, and stereotype-consistent interpretation of identities (Allen, 2011; Meisenbach, 2010; Smith, 2007). Marginalized or low-status groups are generally perceived as a threat to dominant or high status groups in some manner and are often perceived as blocking access to resources or hindering the dominant or high-status group goals (Meisenbach, 2010). However, in this study, the three groups were not only allowed into the target group but were invited by way of university recruitment of international students, federal requirements for accommodation, and staffing enlistment for covering courses. The target group allowed the participants to join the group without the participants having foreknowledge of contingencies and limitations. The participants experienced stigma shock, as reflected in the second theme of the findings, when they received messages from the target group that were unanticipated, surprising, and hurtful. The stigma messages created a barrier for the participants that limited them from full involvement and contribution in their target groups.

The participants were unable to fully form, maintain, and modify organizational identities based on group membership (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) because the stigma messages limited their ability to participate in discourse that produced organizational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Silva & Sias, 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The target groups limited the participants' ability to create and receive consensual validation of a distinct social identity (George & Chattopadhyay, 20016). Further, the target groups in this research did not allow contingent group members to fully engage in self-categorization as members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In essence, the participants were denied a sense of belonging, which left them suspended in liminality. These limits to organizational identification resulted in a confused sense of belonging and hesitant organizational commitment, as well as fewer organizational rewards. The contingent group members had no power to control their difference, the perceptions of their associations, or contrived social disgrace that barred them from bona fide group membership. The participants were denied feelings of solidarity, emotional connection, and psychological protection that bona fide group membership provides (Allen 2011; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1989; Goffman, 1963; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The participants used communicative strategies in order to continue to affiliate with their target groups, even if only partially. This contingent group membership process found in this study is distinctive from the notion of social creativity in Social Identity Theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) where stigmatized (marginalized/low status) individual group members leave and join or affiliate with a higher-status group. The participants observed what was expected of group members by interacting with their target groups (Hecht et al., 2005; Giddens, 1991; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). The participants then used communication to strategically reduce dignity threats. For the international graduate students reducing stigma

messages about their cultural difference meant they needed to be silent observers. Reducing stigma messages from the administration and faculty required the ADA university staff to define and defend access. The ADA staff had to define and engage in relationship bonding in order to access the students with disabilities. The adjunct professors used withdrawal and reframing to protect themselves when interacting with the administration and faculty in their universities.

When the participants were contained in the liminal space of contingent group membership they developed hesitation to fully identify with their target group. Because the participants were constrained by stigma messages, their ability to develop a social identity (Allen, 2011; Gist & Goldstein Hode, 2017; Smith, 2007) was also constrained. Because the participants were simultaneously welcomed, supported, included, disrespected, discouraged, and excluded, they were only partially able to share identity as an organizational member (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The participants did not or were not able take pride in being part of their target groups and regard their contingent membership as a stable social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The participants were not able to engage in dynamic and complex communicative processes that would shape and utilize identity structures to express their identity (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002). The participants were not allowed to participate in discourse that maintains their identification (Scott et al., 1998). These limitations caused the participants to hesitantly identify with their target organizations because they were not and would likely not become bona fide group members .

Finally, the theme titled The Paradox of (not) Belonging contributes to identity and identification theory by defining and describing the lived experience of contingent group members. This liminal space adds dimension to the discussion defining in-group and out-group members (Allen, 2011; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Contingent group

membership extends the scholarly conversation from the dichotomously framed membership categories of being either an in-group member or out-group member to a continuum with in-between status. Contingent group members experience their status as a gradient in that the more they are able to establish identity with the group, the more they are able to form group identification. The better contingent group members can navigate the barriers to inclusion, the better they can reap the rewards of security and identification with their respective target groups.

Practical Implications

The findings in this research have practical value that can be applied to not only higher education, but to institutions, organizations, and workplaces outside of academia. The following are recommendations for the participant groups and their target groups at the organizational, group, and individual levels.

Higher Education

The findings in this study provide administrators and policy makers with a means to consider the impact of contingent group membership within higher education. Examination of the experiences of international students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors has uncovered important considerations related to communication style and inclusive institutional practices and culture. Universities and colleges must look at their own practices to understand how marginalized individuals within the education system are affected by socially constructed perceptions of difference, hierarchical role, and merit. With the knowledge this research provides, higher education can proactively address some of the issues the international graduate students, ADA university staff, and adjunct professors face,. as well as engage in practices, attitudes, and actions that create and sustain dignity.

International Graduate Students

University programs that support international students focus on serving students directly. Many are successful in making students feel welcomed and included, as the participants in this study have confirmed. Universities might consider, at an organizational level, the reasons why international students are surprised by being marginalized and excluded, and the resulting sense of (not) belonging. Suggestions for lessening the negative contingent group experience for international students could include programs for university members that examine perceptions about language proficiency and cultural differences, as well conflicting messages that espouse diversity, yet are intolerant of cultural difference. The addition of cultural awareness for interacting with and teaching international students might be added to student, staff, and faculty orientation programs. Being equipped with information about how to approach, converse with, and build relationships with international students might help university members to permeate the boundaries that separate international students.

Efforts to inform potential international graduate students of some of the barriers they might expect to encounter in U.S. universities would be helpful in setting realistic expectations. Organizations that support international students on campus could incorporate preparatory programs, as well as suggestions for how to navigate entry into their new campus role, thus lessening or eliminating the shock of being stigmatized. For example, providing potential students with an interactive online training that guides them through various scenarios that realistically explains situations they may encounter. Universities have training programs for sexual harassment and cyberterrorism, to name a few, that showcase real-life examples and options for handling problematic encounters. This kind of preparatory training could be accessed by potential international students from university and college webpages. Another program

might involve pairing potential international students with volunteer domestic students prior to leaving their home counties. The intention would be to begin online communication via social media or other online formats to establish a mentor-mentee relationship that may be helpful to guide the new student through the transition to university entry.

Faculty might explore creative learning environments for both potential international and domestic students to encourage interaction between the two groups before and during international students' time on U.S. campuses. For example, universities could make use of vlogging to develop language and speaking skills and exchange interculturally on YouTube (Combe & Codreanu, 2016). Another way faculty might help students navigate contingent group barriers is through experiential learning. Both domestic and international students may improve their intergroup understanding by spending time together outside of the classroom. Working jointly on assignments specific to the purpose of intercultural competencies and understanding may create bridges that overcome difference (Wilson-Forsberg et al., 2018).

Individual students might help navigate barriers for internal students as well. For example, domestic students might experience study abroad to fully understand the perspective of international students on their campuses. Lived experience in traveling, learning a local language, and establishing new relationships while engaged in course materials could provide domestic students with a dynamic new perspective and a sense of empathy (Chiu & Yeh, 2018; Longmire & Harrison, 2018). Another way individual domestic students might help international students navigate contingent group membership is to volunteer as peer-mentors for incoming international students. Making meaningful connections with peer students may be helpful to both the mentor and the mentee by sharing, comparing, and learning from one another.

As the journal data reflect, returning international students share their experiences with others who are considering studying in the U.S. a personal or educational goal. These returning students might help potential students by sharing some of the barriers they encountered and realistic ways they used communication to navigate their contingent group status. By sharing the realities of their time in the U.S., they may help to eliminate the jarring difference between what newcomers anticipate and the realities of studying abroad.

Incoming international students spend time and effort to learn the language and culture of their host country. It is important that these students understand that they are different, and difference is not necessarily positive or negative. International students should and can have rewarding and enjoyable study abroad experiences. Yet, students should be encouraged to weigh the benefits and the costs to being contingent group members. International graduate students might make their experience more manageable if they continued seeking affinity groups, exploring local culture, asking for assistance from professors and advisors, taking advantage of opportunities to socialize with other international students and domestic students, and engaging in self-compassion. These are just a few of the practical implications for universities, faculty, programs, and individuals to better support international graduate students as they navigate the challenges of contingent group membership.

ADA University Staff

University programs that provide accommodation and access services to students with disabilities are effective advocating for students in their academic endeavors, as the participants in this study have confirmed. However, universities might consider, at an organizational level, why the ADA university staff are experiencing stigma messages that marginalize, exclude, and the result in a sense of (not) belonging.

This project can inform university members of the pressures and tensions the ADA university staff face. Suggestions for mitigating the contingent group experience for ADA university staff are in many ways similar to those for international graduate students. Universities might develop or modify programs for university members that provide opportunities to examine the impacts of hierarchical stigma and ableism. The programs should also explore the conflicting messages from university members that espouse diversity, yet are intolerant of staff in low-hierarchical roles. Awareness is the first step, action is next. Actions could include creating a vision, and establishing a commitment of any necessary resources, such as time and money. Finally, any program should facilitate collaboration between the administration, faculty, the ADA university staff, and the student body as a whole.

Ableism on campus may be alleviated with renewed commitment of support for the ADA programs and personnel from administrators and faculty. Administrators would do well to relieve the ADA university staff from the sole responsibility to define their role to faculty and students. Faculty will be better informed about the value of giving students with disabilities the access and accommodation needed for scholastic success. Also, the faculty should better understand expectations for their accountability responsibilities. Students, with and without disabilities should be better informed about the compliance role the ADA university staff perform and the services offered. These awareness opportunities should also inform the organizational members of the role and authority ADA university staff have been given under the auspices of the federal ADA laws. The ADA university staff role can be likened to the HR university staff role in that both facilitate services to individuals, as well as helping organizational members to navigate potentially litigious practices. Many universities have efforts like this in place, however the

intention to welcome ADA university staff as partners in student success is likely not the current focus.

The ADA university staff are partners in student success, much like many of the other student support services on campus. Faculty are tasked with many facets of student success, including curriculum development, instruction, assessment, advising, and social support to name a few. Faculty might choose to see their own role as a team member, rather than being solely responsible for student learning and success. When ADA university staff advise faculty of student needs, it is important that faculty understand students are receiving support from one of the many student support teams. Framing these initiatives as partnerships, rather than perceiving access and accommodation as a burden, will better support the students and the teams that provide services to them.

Efforts to inform potential ADA university staff of some of the barriers they might expect to encounter in their universities would be helpful for them to set realistic expectations. The ADA university staff participants were aware of the stigmas students with disabilities endure. However, the staff themselves were not aware they would be stigmatized. On-boarding of new hires could incorporate preparation, as well as suggestions for how to navigate entry into their new campus role, thus mitigating the shock of being stigmatized. Also, realist training programs, such as those suggested for the international graduate students, might include examples of potential encounters with faculty and students as preparation for the work ahead. As referenced earlier, universities have trainings for sexual harassment and cyberterrorism that are used to showcase real-life encounters and options for handling problematic situations. Similar trainings could be developed to support ADA initiatives as well.

Potential new ADA university staff might research the population of students with disabilities prior to entering their role. This will better prepare them for the realities of where they are situated in the organization, potential marginalization by virtue of the students they serve, and a better understanding of the administrators and faculty who partner with the university's ADA access and accountability team. Ways they might better form expectations would be to connect with professional organizations, visit offices that provide access and accommodation for students with disabilities, and engage in conversation with staff in their new team.

The students with disabilities might be helpful to the ADA university staff as they navigate the barriers of their status by being sensitive to the burden staff endure on their behalf. Doing work on behalf of students is mandated by federal law, however empathy, caring, and advocating are done by choice. Recognizing and acknowledging the personal commitment ADA university staff have made to not only provide access and accommodation, but also to affirm, include, and support students with disabilities, may help the staff to feel a sense of membership and belonging.

Adjunct Professors

This project can inform university members of the marginalization, exclusion, and exploitation adjunct professors face. In the past, adjunct professors were hired to fill a gap when full-time faculty were developing curriculum, engaged in research, or away from the classroom for various opportunities. They were hired to fill emergency and/or temporary instructional needs when staffing shortfalls occurred. However, administrators are increasingly dependent on adjunct faculty and benefit from their flexibility, knowledge, and passion. The budgetary benefits, or low wages, of contract employment are some of the reasons such hiring trends will continue.

There are a number of suggestions for reducing the negative aspects of contingent group experience for adjunct professors. For example, universities could develop programs that provide opportunities to examine perceptions about hierarchical roles across the institution. Administrators and faculty might recognize ways they themselves are hierarchically situated and stigmatized by those in higher positions (Giddens, 1991; Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Silva & Sias, 2010; Young et al., 2015), then envision how they perpetuate stigma in their own ranks. One effective approach to countering stigma messages and microaggressions is the use of micro-affirmations. Micro-affirmations are small acts that promote inclusion, affirmation, attentive listening, and enacted support to marginalized individuals (Rowe, 2008). Micro-affirmations are likely to occur through using appreciative inquiry, recognizing and validating experiences, and affirming feelings. When used strategically, micro-affirmations can proactively strengthen relationships and be especially powerful when delivering constructive criticism or difficult news. Administrators and faculty are in prime positions to positively support adjunct professors through the use of micro-affirmations as one means of social support. These small, subtle acts contribute to an individual's sense of trust and support within the academic environment (Powell et al., 2013). The intentional use of compassionate communication (Miller, 2017), and communicating dignity (Lucas, 2011, 2015) would not only benefit adjunct professors, but also personnel across university ranks.

Like the ADA university staff recommendations, it is important that any programs universities not only increase awareness, but also include ways to act. For example, departments might create opportunities for adjunct professors to collaborate with faculty both academically and socially. Adjunct professors might be invited to participate in research, be part of developing new programs or curriculum, or serve in ways that are meaningful to both the university and the

adjunct professors. Department leaders might invite adjunct professors to be involved in activities that leverage their existing expertise, as well as offering opportunities for development. Many adjunct professor participants in this study were not interested in attending university and departmental meetings, yet the offer should be made. Adjuncts should be considered part of the faculty and valued for their expertise and contributions.

It behooves administrators to acknowledge and welcome adjunct professors as a group. There are numerous policies and hiring practices that can be developed to better support and include adjunct faculty. University leaders should work toward acknowledgement, inclusivity, consistency in supervision, as well as fair treatment for adjunct professors. Intentionally hiring, reviewing, promoting, and incentivizing adjunct professors in ways that support strong connections to the university will communicate value.

One of the advantages higher education sees in utilizing adjunct professor labor is the freedom from entanglements such as performance appraisals, professional training, and other managerial obligations. However, efforts alleviate the emotional and psychological costs to this group of professionals will benefit the organization in the long run. Many universities and colleges do not have on-boarding or orientation for adjunct professors. This is a proactive-step departments can take to not only welcome adjuncts professors but help cohorts to form that may be a source of social support, as well as to offer suggestions for how to navigate entry into their new campus role, thus lessening or eliminating the shock of being stigmatized.

Adjunct professors take pride in their academic accomplishments. Most have doctoral and master's degrees and have invested great time and effort in their course development and delivery of materials to students. Adjunct professors understand that they are not tenured, they recognize contractual and material difference is not necessarily positive or negative. Adjunct

professors should have rewarding and enjoyable instructing experiences. Adjunct professors could foster identification by developing adjunct professor peer groups, coordinating academic and social events, asking for assistance from professors and administrators, and engaging in self-compassion. These are just a few ways universities, faculty, programs, and individuals might help adjunct professors to navigate contingent group membership.

These suggestions are only a few ways the findings of this project might be applied to the three contingent groups situated in higher education. As an institution, higher education can be equipped with the understanding that the challenges associated with contingent group membership are often unanticipated and can result in members feeling a lack of security and a diminished sense of personal agency.

Organizations and Groups

There are many other contingent groups this study does not directly address that are also situated in higher education. For example, first-generation college students, LGBTQ+ faculty and students, aging staff and faculty, non-traditional students, immigrant faculty, all constitute contingent group members. In addition, contingent groups exist in corporations, nonprofit organizations, places of worship, families, and even governments. While organizations may be different and the reasons to join groups are varied, there are benefits to both target groups and the contingent group members that join them. The implications from this research can be applied to individuals, groups, and organization to help mitigate the shock of being stigmatized and experiencing hesitant identification and suspension in liminality. For example, organizational members might engage in activities or programs that help organizations to become aware of ways they stigmatize. Then, undertake action that will help contingent group members to feel welcome and valued. Organizational members need to become aware of ways that they exclude

and deny dignity. Another practical way organizations can use the findings of this research is to advise potential contingent group members of the realities of their membership, including the limitations and constraints, before they enter their role. By being honest and upfront with both the benefits and the realities, individuals can make a more realistic choice about becoming a contingent group members, thus mitigating the insecurity and a lack of autonomy often associated with contingent group membership.

Limitations

This study focused on the shared experiences and outcomes of the three contingent groups who were relegated to liminality. The communicative barriers contingent group members encounter and the emotional experiences with organizational assimilation processes warrant further examination. To a greater or lesser degree, this study was limited by the context of the study, as well as elements of the survey design and technological challenges.

Context of Higher Education

This study was intentionally designed to be conducted within a single type of context, higher education, to demonstrate that all three types of contingent groups are present. Universities are particularly rich sites for interaction and emotional experiences. Higher education is a sector which is highly institutionalized, hierarchical, and resistant to radical change. However, not all organizations are similarly structured. For instance, not all organizations have classified staff, contract workers, or international members. However, the concepts and communicative processes identified in this study regarding assimilation and identification arguably transfer to various types of institutions, such as corporations, places of worship, nonprofits, families, and even to governments.

Technological Challenges

A limitation for this study was the design for collecting data from journal prompts and photo elicitation. Asking participants to journal to seven prompts and asking for photos provided snapshots of the contingent group members' experiences. A limitation of the data collection design was the participants' inability to continue to explore and develop their thoughts. Asking participants to respond to a daily journal prompt on a specific aspect of their experience moved the writing from one topic to the next. The schedule did not allow for rumination to develop more complex responses. Also, the timetable did not allow the addition of memories that might emerge over time. Future studies might be designed to develop deeper reflection on a specific topics. How photo elicitation was used in this study at times led to a limitation. Asking the participants to visually illustrate their metaphors within one day may not have allowed enough time for thoughtful images. Future scholars may consider extending the timeframe to the end of the study, which would give the participants time to capture images that better represent their experiences.

The programming of daily generated email links was complex, as was the ability to edit journal submissions within the calendar day of submission. The complexities of the program design resulted in lost data; specifically, many photographs submitted by the participants. Follow-up emails were sent to the participants in an attempt to recapture the visual illustrations of the metaphors, however all of the images were not available.

Future Directions for Study

Additional Methods

Researchers interested in further understanding contingent group membership as shared by outsiders within, courtesy stigma, and contract workers may find value in testing or exploring

the findings from this research by utilizing other methods. For instance, observation data or shadowing contingent group members would provide valuable information in situ. Future research could benefit from using discourse tracing methodology (Legreco & Tracy, 2009) to examine the formation, interpretation, and appropriation of contingent group members' discourse at the micro level, organizational practices at the meso level, and larger macro institutional discourses, which influence policies and practices. It would be compelling to understand how hierarchy and larger discourses (Magee & Galinsky, 2008) frame, impact, and constrain contingent group member interaction. This inquiry may help illuminate how more privileged organizational members develop and enforce boundaries to bona fide group membership.

Permeability of Communicative Barriers

Scholars should more closely examine the permeability of the communicative barriers that constrain contingent group members. Identifying common barriers and outcomes for contingent group membership may help to discover new ways of constructing messages and forging alternative bonds with target groups. Individuals are choosing identification with groups to which they have not been allowed to previously belong. For example, individuals are navigating group membership regarding gender identification (Connell, 2010) and have hope that bona fide group membership for prospective contingent group members may be a reality.

Communicative barriers that appear impervious to change, such as perceptions and socially constructed difference about racial identity (Morning, 2017), have little permeability. Further study might explore ways that contingent group members, with the cooperation of target group members, can transcend, rather than penetrate these barriers. Relationship bridge-building is a promising area to explore. Contingent group members may be able to transcend

communicative barriers and metamorphize to full-fledge group members by using positive

humor (Lynch, 2002), storytelling (Allcorn & Stein, 2016), compassionate communication

(Miller, 2017), and fostering an atmosphere of dignity (Lucas, 2011, 2015).

Some target groups may exercise power and never grant contingent group members bona

fide membership. Considering that "although power processes can exclude and marginalize

people, they also enable and empower them" (Allen, 2011, p. 37), the time is ripe to create new

groups that are rooted in inclusion. "Power is not limited to persons in power positions; power

exists in the reciprocal relations of the haves and have-nots. Although some persons are

authorized to wield power, everyone engages in power practices, including those who may be

lower in an organizational or societal hierarchy" (Allen, 2011, p. 26.). Being a contingent group

member has benefits. Being able to have influence and status, as well as being able to match the

scripts, values, and assumptions in a group, is important to individuals' sense of belonging,

security, and self-efficacy. If belonging to a group as a contingent group member provides an

individual with benefits that they desire, it is critical to note that membership is also likely to

come with emotional costs.

Emotional Costs

The data identifies potential negative emotional outcomes of contingent group

membership. These include loneliness, a sense of worthlessness, defensiveness, powerlessness,

and more. Further examination of the emotional experience of contingent group liminality may

help researchers and practitioners understand the affective costs required to gain entry yet remain

in target groups as conditional members. For instance, when outsiders within remain and

withdraw from interacting with the target group, they do so at an emotional cost. This is the

"fee" they pay to remain contingent group members. Another example occurs when adjunct

professors "remember to know their place" in order to stay in the good graces of the target group. The participants used self-protection, silence, assertiveness, blending in as communicative strategies to manage liminality. These strategies are employed with emotional costs. Future research could extend the categories of workplace emotion as defined by Miller et al. (2007). The concept of emotional taxes or "the emotional performances customers must 'pay' to negotiate a compulsory interaction" (Malvini Redden, 2012, p. 121) may also be relevant.

Work vs. Woke

Exploring courtesy stigma more broadly could identify the similarities and differences of those who share stigma. This study's participants were stigmatized by virtue of their work, as ADA university staff, supporting stigmatized students with disabilities. They experienced courtesy stigma much like social workers (White & Gilstrap, 2017), medical personnel (Harter et al., 2006), and police or other law enforcement (Conti et al., 2013). However, stigma group allies may experience courtesy stigma differently. As discussed in the literature review, the "wise" (Goffman, 1963) or "allies" (Ostrove et al., 2019), are characteristically defined as members of dominant groups who are committed to and work on behalf of the liberation of a nondominant group (Ostrove et al., 2019). In Hughey's (2012) study of White antiracist advocates participants experienced shunning and shaming from the dominant group (i.e., other White people); they also experienced suspicion and distrust from the target group (i.e., people of color). A question future scholars could explore is, what are the similarities and differences in "work courtesy stigma" (i.e. altruistic paid labor) and "woke courtesy stigma" (i.e. altruistic unpaid social justice) as experienced by contingent group members? These questions might answered by using semi-structured interviews. This qualitative method allows for open-ended data collection that is helpful in exploring participant thoughts and feelings. Semi-structured interviews allow for two-

way conversations, which can facilitate intimate disclosure. Research that continues to explore and define the experiences of contingent groups members is helpful in understanding the nuances of group membership, specifically in regard to identity and identification.

Conclusion

The findings of this phenomenological study do not label every contingent group situation as negative. I venture to suggest that it is likely most people have experienced the liminality of contingent group membership in some from. This study demonstrates that there are complexities and nuances between contingent group membership and bona fide membership. The outcomes are consistent across the types of groups, regardless of individual intentions, expectations, or awareness of one's contingent status. The shock of being denied dignified treatment is consistent, as is the disconcerting feeling of (not) belonging. Individuals should be aware of their own experiences with group isolation, disregard, or even exploitation, so that they can be more attentive to group members who might be experiencing the same. Ideally, bona fide group members should use their privilege to advocate for contingent group members. The findings encourage contingent group members to thoughtfully weigh the benefits of conditional membership with costs of remaining in contingent liminality.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Fliers

ARE YOU AN INTERNATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT?
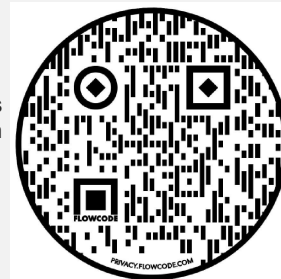### CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research Study - Higher Education Journal and Photo Study

Description of Study: The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of international students in higher education. Participants will share their experiences with journal writing and photos. A $40 gift card will be given to participants in gratitude for sharing their experiences.

Eligibility: To participate in this study, you must be an undergraduate international student studying in the U.S. and 18 years of age or older.

How to Participate: If you are eligible and choose to participate in this 7-day study, scan the QR code to email the researcher. For questions or additional information, text the researcher, **Shelley Hepler**, at 913-428-9367 or e-mail at shelley.hepler@ku.edu.

ARE YOU AN ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION STAFF?
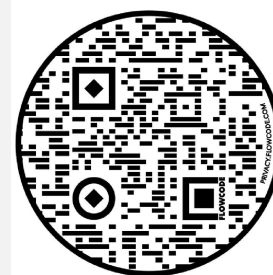### CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research Study - Higher Education Journal and Photo Study

Description of Study: The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of access and accommodations staff in higher education who serve students with disabilities. Participants will share their experiences with journal writing and photos. A $40 gift card will be given to participants in gratitude for sharing their experiences.

Eligibility: To participate in this study, you must be a full-time or part-time employed in a role where you exclusively serve students with disabilities at a college or university and 18 years of age or older. You must not have a disability.

How to Participate: If you are eligible and choose to participate in this 7-day study, scan the QR code to email the researcher. For questions or additional information, text the researcher, **Shelley Hepler**, at 913-428-9367 or e-mail at shelley.hepler@ku.edu.

AREYOU AN ADJUNCT PROFESSOR?
## CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research Study - Higher Education Journal and Photo Study

Description of Study:The purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of adjunct professors in higher education. Participants will share their experiences with journal writing and photos.A $40 Visa card will be given to participants in gratitude for sharing their experiences.

Eligibility:To participate in this study, you must be under a one-year or less teaching contract at a U.S. college or university and over 18 years of age.

How to Participate: If you are eligible and choose to participate in this 7-day study, scan the QR code to email the researcher. For questions or additional information, text the researcher, **Shelley Hepler**, at 913-428-9367 or e-mail at shelley.hepler@ku.edu.
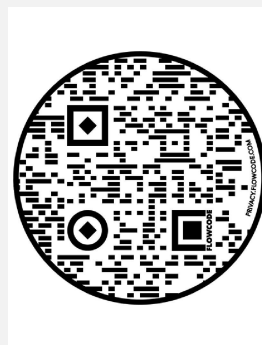
Appendix B: Study Protocol

Respondents will receive an email message with a link to the Qualtrics survey. Before beginning the journaling process, the participants will be introduced to the project (see Appendix C). The introduction will include the expectations, terms, the option to opt out, and contact information for the researcher.

Completion of Consent Form (see Appendix D) and if applicable, Participant Consent for Members of the European Union (see Appendix E).

Completion of Authorization for Release of Photographs (see Appendix F). Click link to photo release.

Collection of demographic survey and mailing address (see Appendix F). Click link to demographic survey.

Then participants will be prompted to begin journal for day 1. Once journal is submitted, an email will be generated to send scheduled subsequent prompt. This process will be repeated for a duration of 7 days (see Appendix H).

Upon completion of seven (7) journal entries, participants will receive a thank you message with an option to participate in member checking (see Appendix I). Primary researcher will mail participant compensation.

Appendix C: Introduction to Project

Welcome to this Higher Education research project. **My name is Shelley Hepler.** I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Kansas and am interested in studying how individuals navigate their experiences as members in institutions of Higher Education. The idea of this project is to delve into and explore your campus group experience from your perspective. This is a journaling and photo project. You will be asked to tell stories, recall incidents, describe impressions, and share how you feel in your campus group as either as a student, staff or faculty.

Here are a few things you will need to know about how to navigate the project and why you are asked to take specific steps. Let's start with the journaling process:

How to use the technology: The process will be pretty simple. You will click the "begin" link once you work through a few forms. Once you access the journal form, you will read the prompt and write, and when done, you will submit. The following day you will receive an email with a link that will take you to the next journal prompt. You will repeat the process throughout the project for a period of 7 days.

Focus: When you sit to start writing, take a moment to think about your role on campus. Focus your mind and pay attention to the emotions that arise and the experiences that come into mind. Look deep inside yourself to possibly discover some of the hidden thoughts and ideas you hadn't previously recognized or even considered.

Minimum: Write at least 500 words for each entry. Please write your responses in English. This will take you about 20-30 minutes. You are welcome to continue writing for as long you feel it is necessary to complete your thoughts. But please write at least 500 words for a thoughtful entry. **On any given day if you feel strongly that you are unable to answer the writing prompt, please write about something relevant to your role at the university that you feel would be helpful for us to know.**

Personal: Speak about your personal experience only. It might be tempting to talk about someone else's story or something you observed that happened to a friend or colleague. However, for this exercise, please only share your own events, reactions, ideas, memories, and so forth.

Descriptive: Use descriptive words. Describe sights, sounds, feelings, and other sensations that help to recreate your experience.

Stay on topic: These writing exercises may spark memories or thoughts that are not specific to the prompt. It's ok to get off topic a bit, however, please make sure you speak to the journal prompt. If you have more to say after that, then, please feel free to write as much as you feel you would like to write.

One of the days you will be asked to take a few pictures of places, items, or situations that literally or symbolically illustrate what you journaled about that day. The

adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" is relevant here. Sometimes pictures can say something you can't put into words. Here are a few things to note about the pictures you take:

Photo Release: Before you start, please accept the photo release, Authorization for Release of Photographs. You will need to agree that I can use your photos in research presentations and publications. A link to the form is on the research project welcome page.

Third-Party Photo Release: It is important to know that if you take a picture of someone else, they will need to release the photo for the project, too.

Deidentify Photos: In order to maintain your confidentiality, I will blur all identifiers in the images, such as names, faces, addresses, identifying marks like tattoos.

Caption Photos: Tell me what your pictures mean by captioning each of the photos. No need to go into detail but do give me an idea of what the pictures mean.

Photo Quality: Do your best to take clear, high-resolution pictures. It will be useful to not guess what is in the pictures. You may use your phone or camera just as long as they are in .jpg or .gif formats and can be uploaded to the program.

Before you get started on the project, there are a few administrative steps you will need to take:

Consent Form: Before you start, please read and accept the terms of the Consent Form. You will need to agree that you are over 18 years of age and meet the requirements of the study. A link to the form is on the research project welcome page.

Demographic information: All research under the University of Kansas collects certain demographic data that is relevant to the project. This includes race, gender, and other data. Please provide the information the best that you can in the Demographic Survey. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable providing the information, please continue with the journaling process. A link to the form is on the research project welcome page.

Thank You: Your time and experience are invaluable. As a small token of appreciation for both, I will send you a $40 Mastercard gift card. To receive the card, I will need a valid mailing address and your social security number or taxpayer-identification for tax purposes. Please provide when prompted in the demographic survey.

One more thing: After the last journal you will be asked if you might be willing to help in one more way. A message will come to you stating that a report of the findings will be shared with a small selection of willing participants before publication. This will be done as a way to vet the research by affirming or challenging the study's findings. If you are willing to help me in this last way, please say yes to the prompt when it comes up on the message.

I am excited you are part of this project and appreciate your time and participation. If you have questions along the way, please call or email me. It is my hope that your experiences will shed light in a new way to help institutions of Higher Education find ways to be inclusive for all.

Sincerely,

Shelley Hepler , M.A., A.B.D.
Principal Investigator
Dept. of Communication Studies
Bailey Hall, Room 102
1440 Jayhawk Blvd.
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7574
(913) 428-9367

Angela Gist-Mackey, Ph.D.
Faculty Supervisor
Dept. of Communication Studies
Bailey Hall, Room 102
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Appendix D: Consent Form

Participant Consent

Name of Study: A Phenomenological Analysis of Contingent Group Membership in Higher Education

KEY INFORMATION

- The specific purpose for this study is to better understand contingent group membership.
- Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary.
- Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes a day, more if you choose.
- You will be asked to do the following procedures: write from a journal prompt for seven (7) consecutive days. More detailed information on the procedures can be found below.
- There are no risks in participating in this study. However, the journal prompts may cause you to recall events or conversations that were uncomfortable.
- A possible benefit of journaling about uncomfortable events or conversations is journaling has been found to help individuals reflect on and possibly make sense of the encounters.
- Your alternative to participating in this research study is not to participate

As a student in the University of Kansas' Department of Communication Studies, I am conducting a research project about the experiences of international students, ADA accessibility and accommodation university staff, and adjunct professors in higher education. I would like you to take part in a journal study to learn more about your experiences within your university or college.

Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

As a student/employee of your respective university or college, please know that participation or declining will have no impact on your academic/personnel evaluations.

In appreciation of your time, you will receive a $40 Mastercard gift card. Your name and address will be recorded to track the gift cards. Your social security number will be requested in order to comply with federal and state tax and accounting regulations

Participation in the journal study indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old.

Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask Shelley Hepler (shelley.hepler@ku.edu) or the faculty supervisor for this project, Dr. Angela Gist-Mackey (angela.gist.mackey@ku.edu), at the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Research Protection Program at (785) 864-7429 or email irb@ku.edu.

Sincerely,

Shelley Hepler, M. A.	Angela Gist-Mackey, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator	Faculty Supervisor
Dept. of Communication Studies	Dept. of Communication Studies
Bailey Hall, Room 102	Bailey Hall, Room 102
1440 Jayhawk Blvd.	1440 Jayhawk Blvd.
University of Kansas	University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7574	Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7574
(913) 428-9367	(785) 864-9874

Accept or Decline (click radial button)

Appendix E: Participant Consent for Members of the European Union

Participant consent for members of the European Union

The specific purpose for the use of the data from this study is to better understand contingent group membership. Your data will be removed from the EU (or member state) and analyzed in the United States at the University of Kansas. Your data will be stored for three (3) years in a secure, off-site, location. I, as the researcher, will view and use the data. Others who will view the data are Dr. Angela Gist-Mackey, my research advisors, and a student research assistant who will me all requirements of the IRB.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), you have the following rights:

- The right of participants to access the data, free of charge, in an accessible format.
- The right to object to a particular use of that data.
- The right to correct the data in the event the individual feels that it is incorrect, incomplete, or inaccurate.
- The right to "be forgotten," or to erase all data relating back to that person in an irreversible fashion.
- The right to move data; this means that you ask to transfer data to you, or to another party, in a commonly used and machine-readable format.

These rights mean you may request access to, a copy of, rectification, restriction in the use of, erasure of your personal data, and portability. These rights erasure your personal data is subject to the University Record Retention Schedule and the Student Records Policy. You also have the right to withdraw consent to the use of your personal data.

You may exercise these rights by contacting: KURES@ku.edu, 785-864-3441, or me, Shelley Hepler, the principal investigator, at shelley.hepler@ku.edu.

Accept or Decline (click radial button)

Appendix F: Authorization for Release of Photographs

I accept this release and authorize Shelley A. Hepler, from the Department of Communication at the University of Kansas, to use the images I provide, and their likeness, including photographic images for the purpose of research in a study on group members in higher education.

I understand that the images described above may be included in, copied and distributed by means of various print or electronic media. They may be presented to live audiences. I understand that my name and identity will not be included with my images. I also understand that my identifiable features (i.e., facial features, scars, marks, and tattoos) will be blurred to help protect my identity.

I understand I can revoke this authorization at any time to the extent that the use or disclosure has not already occurred prior to my request for revocation. In order to revoke the authorization, I must notify the researcher, Shelley Hepler, directly in writing at the following e-mail address: shelley.hepler@ku.edu.

If I cancel this authorization after the publication of the materials outlined above, I understand that my cancellation request may not be honored. If I revoke this authorization, the researcher will not engage in any new uses or disclosures of the images.

The University, Department of Communication, and the researcher will not condition treatment, payment, enrollment, or eligibility for services or benefits on the execution of this authorization. I understand that the images may be subject to re-disclosure by the person or entity receiving such information and thus will no longer be protected by federal privacy regulations.

This authorization is given without compensation for the images. I release any right, title, and/or interest of any kind that I may have in the information or images produced.

I have read this document and understand its contents.

 Accept or Decline (click radial button)

Appendix G: Demographic Survey

What sex do you identify as?
    A. Male
    B. Female
    C. Non-binary
    D. _____ (Short Answer Space)
    E. Prefer not to say
	Which Group do you identify with?
	    A. International Student
	    B. ADA Accommodation and
	       Accessibility Staff
	    C. Adjunct Professor

Please specify your ethnicity (select all that apply):
    A. Caucasian
    B. African American or Black
    C. Latino or Hispanic
    D. Asian
    E. Native American
    F. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    G. _____ (Short Answer Space)
    H. Prefer not to say
	What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
	    A. Some High School
	    B. High School or Equivalent
	    C. Undergraduate
	    D. Bachelor's Degree
	    E. Master's Degree
	    F. Professional Degree
	    G. Doctorate or higher

What is your age? (drop down menu from 18 to +80)	
Please provide your mailing address and social security number for processing the gift card:	

Appendix H: Journal Prompts

Journaling Prompts for International Students

Participants will be asked to journal for seven (7) consecutive days. The participants will be asked to respond in free-text style in a minimum of 500 words per day. The following prompts related to their experience as an international student will be provided daily.

When you sit to start writing, take a moment to think about your role on campus. Focus your mind and pay attention to the emotions that arise and the experiences that come into mind. Look deep inside yourself to possibly discover some of the hidden thoughts and ideas you hadn't previously recognized or even considered.

On any given day if you feel strongly that you are unable to answer the writing prompt, please write about something relevant to your role at the university that you feel would be helpful for us to know.

Day 1: Tell me the story about how you became an international graduate student. Please include moments in your life and in your education that led you to become an international graduate student who studies at your university/college in the United States.

Day 2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of your role as an international student? Please describe specific incidents that illustrate the advantages and disadvantages. Please describe a specific incident(s) that illustrates the advantages and disadvantages.

Day 3: Please Note: For this third journal entry, there are two parts: (1) written text and (2) photos. After the written portion, this journal entry asks you to upload photos. If after you have completed the written portion you don't have photos ready, do not submit your entry. You can return here with the latest link in your email. If you hit submit, you cannot come back later to upload photos.

This is Part 1, Written Text. Describe a metaphor(s) that illustrates your experience(s) as an international graduate student. In your description please be detailed. Once you have written your metaphor, continue on to Part 2.

Definition of metaphor (with embedded link to) Metaphors are a word or phrase for one thing that is used to refer to another thin in order to show or suggest that they are similar. They may be an object, activity, or idea that is used as a symbol of something else. Metaphors are a form of figurative language, which refers to works or expressions that mean something different from their literal definition.

Examples of metaphors: My brother was boiling mad. (Implies he was very angry). The assignment was a breeze. (Implies the assignment was not difficult). Her voice is music to his ears. (Implies her voice makes him feel happy)

This is Part 2, Photos. Take 3-6 photos that symbolize or illustrate your experience as an International Graduate Student or illustrate your metaphor in the first part of this journal. Caption and describe each photo.

Photo Example: An example of illustrating being "so overworked" one take a lunch break might be picturing lunch at your desk.

Day 4: Talk about ways you would like to identify with your domestic student peer group, but because of your international status, you cannot or are not allowed to fully adopt the group's student identity. Please describe a specific incident(s) that illustrates this experience.

Day 5: Share a story about being shunned, dismissed, ignored, or insulted in your role as an international student in relation to associating with domestic students. If you don't have one, discuss a time you were reminded of your status as an international student.

Day 6: Describe the "ideal" international student experience. What would it look like, feel like, and be like to work in this way? How is this similar and/or different from your experience as an international student?

Day 7: Discuss how you experience support and community on your campus as an international student.

Definition of social support (with embedded link to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_support): *Social support means having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give you a broader focus and positive self-image. Social support enhances the quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events.*

Journaling Prompts for ADA university staff

Participants will be asked to journal for seven (7) consecutive days. The participants will be asked to respond in free-text style in a minimum of 500 words per day. The following prompts related to their experience as an international student will be provided daily.

When you sit to start writing, take a moment to think about your role on campus. Focus your mind and pay attention to the emotions that arise and the experiences that come into mind. Look deep inside yourself to possibly discover some of the hidden thoughts and ideas you hadn't previously recognized or even considered.

On any given day if you feel strongly that you are unable to answer the writing prompt, please write about something relevant to your role at the university that you feel would be helpful for us to know.

Day 1: Tell me the story about how you became an ADA university staff. Please include moments in your life that led you to become a university staff that provides access accommodations at your institution.

Day 2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of your role as university staff who provides accessibility and accommodations to students with disabilities? Please describe specific incidents that illustrate the advantages and disadvantages.

Day 3: Please Note: For this third journal entry, there are two parts: (1) written text and (2) photos. After the written portion, this journal entry asks you to upload photos. If after you have completed the written portion you don't have photos ready, do not submit your entry. You can return here with the latest link in your email. If you hit submit, you cannot come back later to upload photos.

This is Part 1, Written Text. Describe a metaphor(s) that illustrates your experience(s) as a university ADA staff. In your description please be detailed. Once you have written your metaphor, continue on to Part 2.

Definition of metaphor (with embedded link to) Metaphors are a word or phrase for one thing that is used to refer to another thin in order to show or suggest that they are similar. They may be an object, activity, or idea that is used as a symbol of something else. Metaphors are a form of figurative language, which refers to works or expressions that mean something different from their literal definition.

Examples of metaphors: My brother was boiling mad. (Implies he was very angry). The assignment was a breeze. (Implies the assignment was not difficult). Her voice is music to his ears. (Implies her voice makes him feel happy)

<u>This is Part 2, Photos.</u> Take 3-6 photos that symbolize or illustrate your experience as an ADA staff or illustrate your metaphor in the first part of this journal. Caption and describe each photo.

Photo Example: An example of illustrating being "so overworked" one take a lunch break might be picturing lunch at your desk.

Day 4: Talk about ways you would like to identify with students with disabilities, but because of your able status, you cannot or are not allowed to fully adopt the group's student identity. Please describe a specific incident(s) that illustrates this experience.

Day 5: Share a story about being shunned, dismissed, ignored, or insulted in your role as ADA staff in relation to providing services to students with disabilities. If you don't have one, discuss a time you were reminded of your status as an international student.

Day 6: Describe the "ideal" ADA staff experience. What would it look like, feel like, and be like to work in this way? How is this similar and/or different from your experience as an ADA staff member?

Day 7: Discuss how you experience support and community on your campus as an ADA staff.

Definition of social support (with embedded link to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_support): *Social support means having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give you a broader focus and positive self-image. Social support enhances the quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events.*

Journaling Prompts for Adjunct Professors

Participants will be asked to journal for seven (7) consecutive days. The participants will be asked to respond in free-text style in a minimum of 500 words. The following prompts related to their experience as an adjunct professor will be provided daily.

When you sit to start writing, take a moment to think about your role on campus. Focus your mind and pay attention to the emotions that arise and the experiences that come into mind. Look deep inside yourself to possibly discover some of the hidden thoughts and ideas you hadn't previously recognized or even considered.

On any given day if you feel strongly that you are unable to answer the writing prompt, please write about something relevant to your role at the university that you feel would be helpful for us to know.

Day 1: Tell me the story about how you became an adjunct professor. Please include moments in your life that led you to become an adjunct professor at a college/university.

Day 2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of your role as adjunct professor? Please describe specific incidents that illustrate the advantages and disadvantages.

Day 3: Please Note: For this third journal entry, there are two parts: (1) written text and (2) photos. After the written portion, this journal entry asks you to upload photos. If after you have completed the written portion you don't have photos ready, do not submit your entry. You can return here with the latest link in your email. If you hit submit, you cannot come back later to upload photos.

This is Part 1, Written Text. Describe a metaphor(s) that illustrates your experience(s) as an adjunct professor. In your description please be detailed. Once you have written your metaphor, continue on to Part 2.

Definition of metaphor (with embedded link to https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor) Metaphors are a word or phrase for one thing that is used to refer to another thin in order to show or suggest that they are similar. They may be an object, activity, or idea that is used as a symbol of something else. Metaphors are a form of figurative language, which refers to works or expressions that mean something different from their literal definition.

Examples of metaphors: My brother was boiling mad. (Implies he was very angry). The assignment was a breeze. (Implies the assignment was not difficult). Her voice is music to his ears. (Implies her voice makes him feel happy)

This is Part 2, Photos. Take 3-6 photos that symbolize or illustrate your experience as an adjunct professor or illustrate your metaphor in the first part of this journal. Caption and describe each photo.

Photo Example: An example of illustrating being "so overworked" one take a lunch break might be picturing lunch at your desk.

Day 4: Talk about ways you would like to contribute to your department or university, but because of your adjunct professor status, you cannot or are not allowed to contribute. Please describe a specific incident(s) that illustrates this experience.

Day 5: Share a story about being shunned, dismissed, ignored, or insulted in your role as adjunct professor. If you don't have one, discuss a time you were reminded of your status as an adjunct professor.

Day 6: Describe the "ideal" adjunct professor experience. What would it look like, feel like, and be like to work in this way? How is this similar and/or different from your experience as an adjunct professor?

Day 7: Discuss how you experience support and community on your campus as an adjunct professor.

Definition of social support (with embedded link to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_support): *Social support means having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give you a broader focus and positive self-image. Social support enhances the quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events.*

Appendix I: Thank You and Member Checking Option

Thank you for your valuable input in this research project. Your gift card will be mailed to you shortly.

Would you be willing to review the research findings and provide feedback on them at a later date?

Accept or Decline (click radial button)

Sincerely,

Shelley Hepler, M. A.   Angela Gist-Mackey, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator   Faculty Supervisor
Dept. of Communication Studies   Dept. of Communication Studies
Bailey Hall, Room 102   Bailey Hall, Room 102
1440 Jayhawk Blvd.   1440 Jayhawk Blvd.
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