AFFECTIVE (DIS) ORDERING OF DIFFERENCE: A PRACTICE APPROACH TO INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ACCESS IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

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By

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AN AFFECTIVE (DIS) ORDERING OF DIFFERENCE

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

AFFECTIVE (DIS) ORDERING OF DIFFERENCE: A PRACTICE APPROACH TO INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ACCESS IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

presented by Scott Edward Branton II,

a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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AN AFFECTIVE (DIS) ORDERING OF DIFFERENCE

This project is dedicated to memory of
Scott Edward Branton
(1959-1986)

And to the future of
Atlas Jay Westridge
(2021-present)
&
Amelia Louise Davis
(2022-present)

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Abstract

Recent organizational theorizing contends that ontological assumptions around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) must be reconsidered. I argue that an underlying assumption of separation within the prevailing approaches to DEI theorizing and practice contributes to the ongoing persistence of inequity within the workplace and organizations. Relationality not only demonstrates how separation is produced and reproduced in research and practice, but how scholars can rethink ontological assumptions surrounding diversity and inclusion. Utilizing participant observation, interview techniques, and document analysis at a college of veterinary medicine and affiliated teaching hospital, this study combines practice theory, communication constitutes organizing (CCO), and affect theory. Four themes emerged from the analysis: affective economy of veterinary identity, atmosphere of whiteness, disordered attunement, and neutrality of practices.

Chapter 1: Introduction

More than two decades ago, Fine (1996) argued that increased diversity in the workplace was "the most pressing challenge of our times" and that diversification would surely affect organizational practitioners and researchers alike (p. 499). Organizations invest billions of dollars a year on diversity recruitment, trainings, employee resources groups (ERGs), policy changes, and programing (Holmes IV et al., 2020; Tatli, 2011). Yet, Fine's declaration still resonates more than a quarter century later as the results of this massive investment have been inconsistent and many organizations have struggled to make good on the promise of improving workplace diversity and inclusion (Adamson et al., 2021). For instance, Quillian et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis of field experiments around hiring discrimination. The researchers analyzed a total of 55,000 applications across 26,000 jobs and found that racial and ethnic discrimination in hiring practices had not changed in the last 25 years.

Despite an abundance of research on diversity and inclusion, inequality persists within organizations (Nkomo et al., 2019). Some argue that an empirical focus on individual or structural explanations for inequality rather than on multilevel and contextual factors has contributed to an inconsistency between theorizing and practice (Ahonen et al., 2014; Leslie, 2019). This project is concerned with both *research practices* and *organizational practices* of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA). Research practices are the ways that IDEA research is conducted, enacted, and/or performed. Organizational practices are the situated activities that produce and reproduce social order more broadly. Most importantly, I argue there is an underlying assumption within IDEA research and practice of separation rather than a focus on relations. By

separation, I am referring to assumptions of individualism, fixity, "apartness," and boundary distinctions that have come to pervade IDEA practices and research (Gunnarsson, 2017). This ontology of separation assumes that IDEA are accomplished outside of the ordinary, everyday, ongoing activities that constitute an organization. This separation can be seen in extraordinary activities such as diversity programing, safe spaces, resource groups, and training. In these contexts, IDEA work is disconnected from the ongoing communication and practices that reproduce the core organization.

In this chapter, I begin by exploring the specific organizational context of veterinary medicine that provides the scene for my investigation. Second, I offer an overview of problems within IDEA practice *and* research. Third, I outline my theoretical assumptions and discuss relational approaches in practice theory, communication constitutes organizing (CCO), and affect theory to better understand IDEA as produced and reproduced through ordinary, taken for granted practices. Finally, I offer a rationale for the study and indicate possible contributions to the field. Understanding the value of a practice-based, affect-centric approach to IDEA first requires recognition of the failures and limitations of the prevailing approaches to diversity, equity, and difference.

IDEA and Veterinary Medicine

In 1970 women comprised less than ten percent of practicing veterinarians in the United States (AVMA, 1999). Women were explicitly discriminated against by veterinary schools' admissions practices (Irvine & Vermilya, 2010). It was not until antidiscrimination legislation threatened to withhold federal funding that admission practices were revised. Since the 1980s the number of practicing female veterinarians has increased over 300% (Irvine & Vermilya, 2010). Currently, around 88% of veterinary

students identify as cisgender-heterosexual-females (AVMA, 2021). Research has shown that professions comprised mostly of women often lose their occupational status (Ashcraft et al., 2012). However, perceptions of veterinary medicine continue to position the profession as an elite, highly technical, and demanding medical profession (Knights & Clarke, 2019). The profession is still regarded as desirable. In fact, veterinary medicine was considered the third most popular profession among children in 2019 (DigitalHubUSA, 2019).

Alongside the profession's recent gender shift, several scholars have documented how entrenched, gendered practices within the profession have resulted in women earning 18 percent less than men while being less likely to serve in leadership roles or own their own practices (Neill et al., 2021). Treanor and Marlow (2021) argued that the career progression of women veterinarians was stymied by market forces such as corporate masculinity and entrepreneurial discourses. Even as female bodies came to dominate the profession, paternalism continued to dominate the systemic underpinnings of veterinary medicine.

Additionally, the profession has experienced several issues surrounding wellness and wellbeing such as high levels of anxiety (Knights & Clarke, 2018), compassion fatigue (Hill, LaLonde, & Resse, 2020), and even suicide (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018; Tomasi et al., 2019). Neill et al (2021) argue that more than 80% of veterinarians meet the clinical score for burnout. Karaffa and Hancock (2019) surveyed 573 veterinary medical students about their willingness to seek mental health services. They found that self-stigma and public stigma toward mental health served as barriers to seeking care.

Beyond gender and mental health, veterinary medicine has been forced to address its persistent lack of racial and ethnic diversity and issues with systemic racism in the profession. In a response to an editor's note in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, a practicing veterinarian lamented the editor using the journal to bring attention to racial discrimination in the profession:

> I am extremely disheartened with these attitudes and offended by the entire systemic racism argument. Yes, there are racist people. But veterinary medicine, as a profession, is not systemically racist […] Proclaiming veterinary medicine to be a white profession reeks of jumping on the bandwagon to be politically correct (Morris, 2021, p. 1319).

Despite the claims by Morris and others that veterinary medicine is not marred by systemic racism, the profession is deeply homogenous. Ninety-one percent of practicing veterinarians in the United States are white while less than 1% are black (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). The racial and ethnic makeup of veterinary students offers a similar outlook. Eighty-five percent of veterinary medical students are white, 5.2 % are Asian or Pacific Islanders, 5.6% are Hispanic or Latinx, 1.7% are Black, and .2% are American Indian or Alaska Native (AVMA, 2021). Since 2005, the American Veterinary Medical Association (2021) has invested in pipeline efforts intended to increase racial and ethnic diversity among students and faculty as well as in organizational leadership positions. In July 2020, the Multicultural Veterinary Medical Association released a video of 387 personal accounts of veterinarians of color sharing their experiences with racism and discrimination within the profession.

Given the challenges facing veterinary medicine, the field offers a unique context for studying IDEA practices. Growing occupational demands, entrenched gender disparities despite dramatic shifts in gender makeup, ongoing issues of wellbeing, and racial and ethnic homogeneity represent troubling trends for the future of the profession. Like other STEM fields, veterinary medicine is finally grappling with the systemic barriers that have characterized the occupation since its inception.

IDEA in the workplace

In this dissertation, I focus on two primary weaknesses with current practices in IDEA work. First, IDEA are treated as separate from ordinary practices and IDEA are viewed as context neutral. I discuss each of these weaknesses separately. First, organizations have routinely positioned IDEA as separate from every day organizing practices. Here, IDEA function problematically in two ways. First, IDEA practices are concerned with symbolic representations such as signs, statements, and strategic plans as demonstrations of their commitment to diversity (Ahmed, 2012) rather than on ordinary practices. This focus on symbolism positions organizations as fashionable (Prasad et al., 2011) and competitive in the global marketplace (Smulowitz et al., 2019). As a result, the focus is on organizations' symbolic positioning and strategic branding rather than on ongoing practices of IDEA. Second, IDEA practices tend to operate alongside workplace conditions by investing in safe spaces, trainings, or mentorship programs. These programs position IDEA as a separate practice that is not concerned with challenging everyday practices. Research based in this assumption of separation suggests that inclusion practices are conditioned based on the potential affective value of particular differences (Tyler, 2019) or situated as a resource that is managed to meet organizational

standards (Martins, 2020; Leslie et al., 2017). For example, the hotel chain Marriott boasts about their award winning "Take Care" program that promotes cultural competence through inclusive trainings. However, since 2020 there have been several lawsuits filed against Marriot for issues of racial discrimination (Sonnemaker, 2020). By positioning IDEA alongside existing conditions, organizations promulgate a separation between IDEA and ordinary practices where IDEA functions parallel to the inequity sustained in everyday practice (Tyler & Vachanni, 2021). As a result, the potential for IDEA to *transform* practices is muted such that ordinary practices are not seen as classed, gendered, or raced (Acker, 2006), but instead are perceived as neutral.

Second, IDEA workplace practices are disconnected from context in favor of generalizability, standardization and a one size fits all approach (Denissen et al., 2020). Researchers argue that this separation from context has created inconsistent results (Nishii et al., 2018) largely because contexts are historically complex and multifaceted (Leslie, 2019). In this case, *context* refers to the sociopolitical and situated factors that influence practices (Nkomo et al., 2020). Standardization emerges in the form of trainings and policies that are decontextualized from what may be taking place within the organization. Chang et al (2019) studied the effects of diversity trainings at a large organization and found that while they changed behaviors of white women, they had little effect on the behaviors of dominant groups such as white male employees. Alongside the push for standardization, research suggests that individual level inequality and inequity persist and have even gained traction (Denissen et al., 2020). Moreover, historically marginalized groups continue to experience negative effects in the workplace from

individual level discrimination ranging from microaggressions to macro level structures like discriminatory hiring practices or exclusionary policies (Ozturk, 2020; Jones, 2020).

IDEA Research

At a time when issues such as racial inequality, transphobia, and sexism are at the forefront of collective consciousness, diversity scholars face what Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi, and Thatcher (2019) call a "critical juncture" (p. 499). At the center of this juncture is an assumed ontological and epistemological separability that creates challenges in diversity research. This separability is apparent in three problematics of diversity research.

First, diversity research in management, organization studies, and communication is hampered by dualisms such as structure-agency, micro-macro, inclusion-exclusion, and mind-body. By dualisms, I mean the false binary relationships that characterize contradictions and paradoxes (Putnam et al., 2016). The most common dualism found in the diversity literature is the individualism-societism (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019a) dualism. First, Janssens & Stayaert (2019) note that individualism is largely promoted by organizational behavior and management scholars. Here, psychological theories such as social identity theory (SIT) or intergroup theory focus on individual cognition, implicit bias, and stereotyping. Through individualism, the social world takes place in the human mind and data collection is carried out in the form of experiments, surveys, and interviews (Trittin & Schoeneborne, 2017).

In contrast, critical diversity scholars argue that societism more accurately addresses inequity. Societism utilizes a constructivist approach, arguing that diversity and inequality are socially constructed through discourses, power structures, systems, and

hierarchies (Zanoni & Janssens, 2010). Here, discourse refers to texts, language, and meaning structures that exert power and "bring objects and subjects into being" (Fairclough, 1992). A societist view utilizes textual artifacts and interviews to unearth sustained social inequality. Researchers posit that both critical and psychological approaches are "implicitly acknowledging the need for the other one" in their argumentation (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019a, p.521). Nevertheless, this dualism perpetuates a hackneyed, partial, and power-laden hierarchy that marginalizes relational forms of investigation and thinking (Skoglund & Holt, 2020).

Second, research overwhelmingly focuses on diversity *specific* phenomena such as initiatives, trainings, programming, implicit bias, and recruitment. However, these practices are rarely examined in connection with ordinary practices. The assumption is that diversity research is separate from organizing practices such as work tasks, mentoring, networking, leadership, and task performance. Moreover, ordinary practices (i.e., professionalism, economics, branding) that constitute diversity-specific practices are rarely considered in IDEA research and practice (see Arcinega, 2020). Scholars have thoroughly documented the unintended consequences associated with diversity initiatives that further instantiate marginalization around organizational processes (Leslie, 2019; Denissen et al., 2020).

Third, diversity research primarily follows an individualist approach that implicitly backgrounds situational factors such as materiality, bodies, and affect. In this way, corporeality is often taken for granted, which in turn produces a subject that is passive, disembodied, and separate from all other contextual forces (Reckwitz, 2017). For example, Ozturk and Berber (2020) studied selective incivility by professionals of color

in the workplace. They demonstrated how professionals of color challenged the assumed whiteness within discourses of civility. Here, emotion and bodily feeling associated with subtle racism were absent from the analysis despite their presence in these experiences. This absence resulted in an implicit separation of race from emotion, bodily sensation and feeling. When nonhuman entities such as objects, bodies, and artifacts are accounted for in IDEA research, they are often presented as separate, rather than connected to cognition or discourse (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019). In fact, Brewis (2017) argues that emotions and feelings have only been tangentially recognized in diversity research. When emotions are considered, it is usually as a "by-product or outcome of diversity practice" (p. 519). More importantly, an individualist approach takes humans as the primary unit of analysis and rarely interrogates how diversity is constituted through discursive, embodied *and* material entanglement (see Janssens & Stayaert, 2020). Taken together, this ontological separation in diversity research "has left the field underprepared and ill-equipped to theorize" and challenge the durability of social (dis)ordering and inequality in work and organizing (Nkomo, et al., 2019, p. 511).

To address the problems with separability, I answer Janssens and Stayaert's (2019) call to explore diversity, inclusion, equity and access as an ongoing, complex plenum of connections and relations that are historically, socially, and politically produced and reproduced in practice. Relationality is a growing trend in management, organization studies, and communication that positions humans and nonhumans on equal footing and not as discrete entities but as the product of relations and connections (Kuhn et al., 2017). From this purview, I conceive of diversity related phenomena as a process of connecting and relating emerging in action.

As such, this study explores this notion of connection and relation within IDEA through practice theory, communication constitutes organizing, and affect theory. First, practice theory demonstrates how social order is produced and reproduced through the performance of taken for granted practices and their connections. Next, communication constitutes organizing (CCO) explains how connections and relations materialize in and through communicative practices. Finally, affect theory, understood as the flow of sensation and feeling, articulates how connections and relations are configured and reconfigured to form certain kinds of social order.

Practice Theory

Practice theory describes organizing and work as a texture of practices that constitute the production and reproduction of social ordering (Gherardi, 2012). Practices are situated activity rooted in *performativity*. Here, performativity is a *collective knowledgeable doing* where knowing and doing are inseparable. More importantly, practices are discursive, material, and embodied entanglements that are implicated in a heterogenous situated context. Practice theory is relational such that "phenomena are always conceived of in relation to each other, produced through a process of mutual constitution" (p. 522). The practice approach used here seeks to decenter the human as the unit of analysis and focuses on how practices are "connection-in-action," taken up, and emerge in context (p. 3).

Specifically, I follow Gherardi's (2019) post-humanist practice approach that draws on feminist new materialisms (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1991) and actor network theory (Latour, 2005), to account for corporeality, power, and ethics. Post humanist practice theory envisions ethics as a practice of choice that determines and is formed by

politics. Under posthumanist practice theory, power is not inscribed *on* bodies, but functions as the power to *connect* or not to *connect*. In this way, posthumanist practice theory demonstrates how structures and social order are spatially and temporally formed in taken for granted practices. Notions of whiteness, discrimination, and privilege are made durable only through their production and reproduction (Nicolini, 2013). A posthumanist practice approach addresses the problematics of separability that constrain diversity research: the presence of dualisms, addressing entanglement, and emphasizing the importance of connections.

Practice theory traverses dualisms by focusing on a nexus of practices in a "flat ontology" similar to a web (Dougherty, 2011; Gherardi, 2019). Questions concerned with micro and macro-organizational dualisms are abandoned because the focus remains at the level of practice. Instead, practices are connected to each other to form a constellation of practices (Hui et al., 2017). Envisioning practices as a constellation addresses how practices appear structured over time. Thus, traditional macro issues such as racism or ableism are understood as a bundle of practices.

Second, a relational ontology accounts for the various elements that constitute a practice and matter in the situation. Not only does this challenge the implicit assumption that actors and their relations are fixed, posthumanist practice theory exposes power and inequality as sociomaterially constituted, indeterminate, and situated (Gherardi, 2016). Through their production and reproduction, action and meaning materialize and may appear fixed. However, this stability of action and meaning is precarious simply because it is carried out in practice.

Finally, practice theory emphasizes how practices are not separate, but only emerge in their connection to other practices. Thus, a practice approach recognizes that the sociomaterial elements that constitute a diversity *specific* practice are connected, but also that diversity specific practices are connected to organizing practices. Diversity research has long pointed to the fact that organizations have made distinctions between diversity practices and organizational practices writ large (Mease, 2016; Zanoni & Janssens, 2015). Although practice theory demonstrates how social ordering is accomplished in the performance of practice, its understanding of the formation of connections and relations that constitute practices remains limited (Kuhn, 2021). Thus, I turn to communication constitutes organizing (CCO) to demonstrate how connections are formed in and through communicative practices. While practice theory envisions communication as conversation and language, CCO positions communication as the materializing of connections and relations.

Communication Constitutes Organizing and Diversity

The relationship between diversity and communication remains a partial and tenuous one. I draw on Ashcraft's (2009) definition of communication as "ongoing, situated, and embodied process whereby human and non-human agencies interpenetrate ideation and materiality toward realities that are tangible and axial to organizational existence and organizing phenomena" (p. 26). In other words, communication is more than "human discursive acts that generate meaning" (Kuhn, 2021, p. 115), but is the *materialization of connections in and through practices* that form realities. In communication, scholars have struggled to theorize and address the durability and ordering of difference, outside of gender, that persist in organizing and work (Ashcraft &

Allen, 2003; Ashcraft, 2011). While the field of communication has generated novel insights around difference, organizing process, tensions, and identity, research remains situated in language and discourse. This is because communication scholars implicitly position diversity as a human *discursive practice* instead of a communicative practice of connecting, relating, and linking (for exceptions see Gist-Mackey, 2018; Ashcraft et al., 2012). This approach fails to account for the ways in which communication circulates and constitutes organizational boundaries. As such, I propose exploring IDEA through a communication as constitutive of organizing (CCO) approach. Here, CCO positions organizing and the more stable form of organization as occurring only in communication.

Specifically, a CCO approach extends diversity theorizing in three ways. First, it situates diversity as communicative practices that are taken for granted, ongoing, and repeated in time and space. Next, CCO questions both the ontology of organizing and organization, and how they are accomplished. On the surface, this questioning may seem tangential to diversity research. However, CCO also questions how IDEA, as communicative practice, is accomplished and constitutes organizing. As Ballard et al (2020) argues, "despite good intentions and anti-racism aims, we continually reproduce exclusion and inequity" (p. 604). In other words, scholars must go beyond pointing out exclusion, inequality and discrimination to demonstrate how the becoming of diversity emerges in the materialization of connections. Finally, CCO reframes IDEA as a messy, precarious accomplishment that implicates a multiplicity of actors in its becoming. Unfortunately, CCO scholars have rarely extended this theorizing to the study of difference and diversity to address the durability of workplace inequality (see Mease & Terry, 2012). Notions of power, domination and justice have largely been absent from

CCO scholarship (Mease, 2021; Kuhn, 2021). To address this limitation, affect theory exposes how power and domination happen in the configuring and reconfiguring of connections and relations. In other words, social order relies on the flow of feeling and bodily sensation.

Affect Theory and Emotions

Affect theory seeks to understand, reinsert, and foreground bodily feeling and sensation in production and reproduction of social (dis)order. Not only does affect theory offer a means for understanding often inarticulable experiences but affect reimagines IDEA research and practice as a process of becoming and transformation. Historically, organizational scholars have studied affect as moods states, or as a core feeling based on cognition (Ashkanasy et al., 2002). However, this understanding of affect conceives of affect and emotion as fixed and located in the minds of individuals. Recently scholars such as Massumi (2015) describe affect as the "capacity to affect and be affect" (p. 7); affect maintains bodily production and reproduction as distinct from emotion. Affect is lively, sensory, and felt bodily excitation that is pre-personal (Ashcraft, 2019). In other words, affect is a collective feeling and sensation that circulates and configures our lifeworlds; it is an "ineffable" feeling before we can categorize feeling. As Kuhn et al. (2017) define it, affect is the "transpersonal stream of sensation on which any meaningful moment arrives" (p. 60).

Affect theory signifies the flow, circulation, and transposing of sensory and bodily triggers that characterize relations. Yet, only recently have scholars begun to point out the phantasmal constitution of diversity as that which "resists being captured and pinned down" (Schwabeland & Tomlinson, 2015, p. 1924). Scholars have pointed to how

notions of anxiety and fear discursively manifest in IDEA (Christensen & Muhr, 2018; Mikkelsen & Wahlin, 2019). Furthermore, Ahmed (2014), who views affect and emotion as indistinguishable, theorizes affective politics of how fear and anxiety are entangled with objects, bodies, and space where "fear shrinks bodily space […] and involves the restriction of bodily mobility in social space" (p. 64). Thus, affective politics refers to the registering of openness and possibility in a situation, and that "no situation is fully predetermined by ideological structures or codings" (Massumi, 2015, p.58). I argue that affective politics, as the configuring and reconfiguring of connections and practices, explains how indeterminacy is controlled through the flow of bodily sensation and feeling. Finally, scholars have recently begun studying diversity, affect, and embodiment in the constitution of diversity discourse (Fotaki & Pullen, 2019). Again, communication is relegated as a discursive permutation rather than a sociomaterial practice. Thus, I argue that bringing together diversity, affect, practice, and communication is necessary for exposing the ordinary, taken for granted constitution of inequity and exclusion.

In short, a relational approach frames the implicit separation that permeates IDEA as an ongoing process of connection. Moreover, this project seeks to examine how inequity and social (dis)order are enacted and sustained through ordinary practices. Here, practices are connection-in-action that are sociomaterial, situated, and connected to other practices. Communication, then, is reframed as the materialization of connections in and through practices. Finally, affect explains how connections are made, configured and reconfigured through the flow of feeling and bodily sensation.

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to combine communication, practice theory, and affect theory to reconceptualize social (dis)ordering of difference (IDEA) in organizations as sustained in ordinary practice. Thus, I answer Janssens and Stayaert's (2019) call to bring a practice approach to diversity research. In concert with this idea, where practice scholars view communication as a type of discursive practice (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019; Gherardi, 2019), I build on this approach by situating communication as the materializing of connections and relations between sociomaterial elements and practices. The purpose of this study is to connect communication, affect, and diversity research in the logic of practice. This study aims to understand the enactment of IDEA as rooted in ordinary practices and how connections are more than the human negotiation of meaning (Kuhn, Ashcraft, & Cooren, 2017) but as a sensory process of *connecting* and *disconnecting* various sociomaterial beings and practices. Furthermore, this study takes meaning *and* matter as entangled and rooted in performativity (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015). In other words, the separation of meaning and matter is an act of configuration and reconfiguration that relies on the flow of affect (Ashcraft, 2019). To fully capture this process of connecting and relating requires situating the human negotiation of meaning as performative and decentering it as one of many outcomes that matter in a situation.

I examined how organizing practices of diversity and difference were produced and reproduced in organizations, organizing and work. In short, this study is concerned with how connecting and relating 1) are constituted and sustained through practices, 2) materialize through communicative practice, and 3) configure and reconfigure realities of social (dis)order surrounding workplace inequality. Rather than reifying notions of

whiteness, heteronormativity, and cisnormativity as stable, they are understood as precarious accomplishments sustained in and through mundane practices (Stewart, 2007; Mease, 2021).

This study contributes to the literature on diversity, affect, and practice in three ways. First, exploring diversity and inclusion through a relational ontology is necessary to view diversity, organizing, and work as a "knotty relational complex" (Kuhn, 2021, p.115). In this way, diversity emerges not as separate from other practices of organizing, but as a process of linking, relating, and connecting in an ongoing heterogenous matrix (Gherardi, 2019). Second, this study brings communicative practice to the forefront in IDEA research. Not only is the unit of analysis focused on practices, but communication is positioned as constitutive of *practice* and subsequently diversity.

Third, I recenter affect and emotion in IDEA research by understanding affect as the capacity to affect and be affected (Massumi, 2015) and emotion as the articulation and labeling of feeling. Thus, bodies, spaces, and practices become lively, sensory, and feeling. Most importantly, this study demonstrates how affect configures connections and actions which has only recently been considered in IDEA scholarship (see Fotaki & Pullen, 2019).

Next, I contribute to the diversity literature by focusing on ordinary practices that constitute diversity specific practices *and* organizing practices. In addition, this study seeks to investigate practices in their becoming. In other words, I aim to show how a bundle of practices are made to appear as structured and fixed rather than as a precarious accomplishment. Finally, this study contributes to the literature by challenging monolithic notions of exclusion such as whiteness, ableism, and heteronormativity.

Instead, this study explores these powerful “things” as ordinary encounters that emerge, become situated, and are taken for granted.

Project Overview

Chapter two of this project provides an extensive review of the problems within IDEA research and practice and addresses how relational approaches of practice theory, communication constitutes organizing, and affect theory serve as fertile grounds for understanding social inequity. Chapter three, then, provides a detailed description of my methods drawing on affectographyand interview techniques. Chapter four addresses the emergent findings, and Chapter five discusses contributions to theory and practice, as well as strengths and limitations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review four primary areas of extant literature that inform the proposed study. In the first section, I outline problems with inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) research and practice. I then provide an overview of relational theorizing and how such thinking addresses the limitations of a separation focus within IDEA theorizing and practice. The remainder of the literature review draws on three relational theories of practice, communication, and affect to rethink IDEA as relation and connection.

First, through *practice theory*, I explain how the social ordering of IDEA occurs in and through ordinary practices. While I discuss the general premises of practice theory, I follow Gherardi's (2012) posthumanist practice approach to position practices as relational, situated, sociomaterial, and a *collective knowledgeable doing*. I specifically focus on three essential areas of Gherardi's theorizing: situatedness, formativeness, and agencement.

Second, I demonstrate how practice theorizing takes for granted the role of communication practices in understanding the social ordering of IDEA. Thus, I draw on the communicative constitution of organization (CCO) and its usage in IDEA and difference scholarship to recenter communication in the production and reproduction of social order. Specifically, I draw on recent CCO approaches to demonstrate how connections and relations that constitute practices *materialize through communication*.

Finally, to understand how connections and practices are tuned and direct attention in a certain way, I explore *affect* as the flow of bodily excitation and feeling. Here, I review the literature on affect theory and its connection to emotion and IDEA.

Specifically, I demonstrate the flow of intensity, bodily sensation and feeling influences how connections and practices within IDEA are configured and reconfigured.

Problems within IDEA research

Diversity, understood here as the (dis)ordering of difference, represents a particular kind of relation that is produced and reproduced through an ontology of *separation*. An ontology of separation or separability here refers to demarcation, absolute exteriority, and boundary distinctions made between bodies, objects, spaces, artefacts, and practices (Jones, 2013). A crucial characteristic of separability is individuation, or the distinction between subjects and objects. Through separation, entities appear determinate, fixed, and exist outside of their relations. I argue that diversity research and practice rests on this logic of separation while backgrounding the entanglement of relations. This ontology of separation leads to five problems within IDEA research and practice.

First, conceptions of diversity assume a logic of separation by positioning the discursive practices of humans as the starting point. Janssens and Stayeart's (2019) review of diversity literature in *Management and Organization Studies* found that human discursive practices were the dominant unit of analysis in both individualist and societist based research. Similarly, Holck's (2018) analysis of diversity research showed how everyday work practices were rarely considered in favor of diversity discourses. As such, bodies, emotions, objects, and context are backgrounded out of relations, symbolically shaped, or seen as stable rather than emergent. For example, despite the emphasis on emotionality within IDEA practices and research, emotions are rarely foregrounded in theorizing, or they are subject to discursive representation (Mikkelsen & Whalin, 2019;

Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). Simply put, what comes to matter in diversity research and practice is most often individual and discursively shaped.

Second, as previously articulated, a great deal of IDEA research hinges on individualism where actors preexist their relations. This manifests in two ways. First, diversity research and practice tend to be concerned with individual categories of difference such as race, gender, ability, and sexuality rather than relations that constitute such perspectives (Nkomo et al., 2019; Holck et al., 2016; Ahonen et al., 2014). For example, the term *diverse* often signifies non-white, whereas *non-diverse* often means white-cisgendered males (Aschraft & Allen, 2003). Such individualist approaches present actors with essentialized identities that are fixed and stable prior to relational contact. For example, Smulowitz et al (2019) analyzed the racial diversity in US law firms across organizational levels. They found that the top performing firms had a greater distribution of racial diversity at the associate level. Implicit in this study is the notion that racial diversity provides firms with a competitive advantage. Here, racial diversity is essentialized and framed as a disembodied financial resource.

This critique of individualist approaches is not intended to ignore categories of difference, but to position them as emergent rather than fixed. Moreover, critical diversity researchers have argued that focusing on categories of difference, especially in practice, reinforces the discursive production of inequality within organizing processes. For example, Fernando (2021) observed how a western multinational corporation (MNC) imposed its diversity practices onto a Sri Lankan subsidiary. The diversity practices of the MNC framed women and ethnic minority engineers as inferior and in need of help. Similarly, McDonald & Kuhn (2016) found that contradictions between the official and

unofficial occupational branding discourses around women in computing and IT contributed to inequality and discrimination. They observed the official occupational branding efforts to fix the meaning of diversity as "inclusive" and "welcoming" through individual success stories. However, this branding contradicted the experiences of women in IT who described the field as toxic and "inhospitable" to women.

IDEA scholars have largely been concerned with individuals' experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and biases around trainings and initiatives, strategic plans, or leadership (Martin & Phillips, 2017). Here, the logic of separation surfaces in the disentanglement of individual experience from organizational structures and practices. The same separability is apparent in the focus on individual organizational actors such as managers, employees, or diversity practitioners as the subject of inquiry (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2011; Tatli, 2011). Further entrenching individualist assumptions, scholarship has tended to locate the capacity for change within an individual's cognitive behavior (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019). When organizational cultures and multi-level structures are considered in empirical analyses, they are often dislocated from social action (Smulowitz et al., 2019).

Third, implicit in IDEA research and practice is the desire for a set of universal "best practices" intended to solve inequality. This desire not only relies on a prescriptive approach, but also connotes a singular way of addressing diversity and inclusion. Embedded in this assumption is a universalist perspective on causality that historically overlooks the inseparability of context. These generalizable frameworks promote the idea that diversity is determinate and capable of being captured (Christensen and Muhr, 2018).

Best practice approaches are the product of what Barad (2007) refers to as *agential cuts*. Agential cuts are boundary making practices that 1) work to eliminate indeterminacy, and 2) create a local distinction within phenomena (such as IDEA) whereby "boundaries, properties, and meanings" are made to appear fixed and stable (p. 340). Moreover, scholars continue to argue that these prescriptions are highly inconsistent and further produce social inequality through economic rationality (Smulowitz et al., 2019), remarginalization (Harris, 2012), or the focus of inclusion on white men (Arcinega, 2021). In fact, Ahonen et al (2014) found that\

context was only considered in 15% of 39 IDEA articles they reviewed. They argue that prescriptive approaches embody governmentality by determining what or who falls under the purview of diversity while separating efforts from historical context.

Fourth, diversity and inclusion as "things" are often segmented from everyday organizing practices. This segmentation is both salient in the analysis of research findings (Holck, 2018) and in how practitioners construct diversity initiatives. We can simply turn to the way researchers have understood inclusion, diversity, equity, and access as separate, distinct phenomena responding to difference (Roberson, 2006; Adamson et al., 2020). In practice, initiatives, programs, trainings, and chief diversity officers fall under the purview of diversity management and represent overt efforts to address inequality. For this reason, they are segmented and conceptualized/forced to engage as if distinct from organizational practices. It is not surprising then, that organizations overlook the fine-grained practices that reproduce social inequality. In fact, Romani, Holck, and Risberg (2019) found that human resource professionals framed their diversity initiatives as benevolent despite reinforcing structural discrimination. At the same time, Denissen,

Benschop, and van den Brink (2020) demonstrated how employee resource groups (ERG's), founded on the notion of distinct social identities, stifled connection, ignored intersection, and upheld privilege. In both studies, social inequality was reproduced because IDEA efforts and practices were positioned separately from mundane organizational practices.

Finally, the prevalence of separability in diversity research and practice is best understood through the concept of *recognition*. Recognition, understood as reciprocation, represents the process of differentiating that connects the self and the other (Barad, 2013). In IDEA research and practice, recognition operates as an assumed and practiced separation between the self and the other (Tyler, 2019). As Introna (2013) argues, an ontology rooted in separation assumes things "already are what they are" and fall within a preexisting order. Drawing on Barad, Introna (2013) contends that separation, in this case *bifurcation*, continuously produces boundary conditions, or agential cuts, where humans are at the center. On the one hand, the cuts we make are not separate from us. On the other hand, bifurcations are "an act of violence in which some beings become valued at the expense of others." Through bifurcation, the self and the other are positioned as fixed and stable, which leads to a constant misrecognition of the other (Tyler, 2019).

In diversity research and practice, I argue that the "other" is formulated as: 1) other humans, 2) difference, and 3) objects. What emerges from this formulation is the bifurcation of the self from the other and a precarious hierarchy of significance that allows for the appropriation of "things" as instruments of value. The notion of value is rooted in neoliberalism where all aspects of life such as ideas, objects, and identities are subject to "commodification, monetization, and capital accumulation" (Branton &

Compton, 2021). Under neoliberalism, "things" such as the self and the other gain exchange value based on market relations (Ahonen et al., 2014) where the self is entrepreneurial and self-governing. The business case for diversity—the notion that diversity provides organizations with a competitive advantage—comes into play as differences are viewed as valuable for the organization. As such, market relations drive the business case for diversity and inclusion by capitalizing on the other's desire for recognition.

Recognition, then, becomes a commodified resource that carries affective value for organizations. For example, Tyler and Vachanni (2021) illustrated how one organization coopted the desire for LGBTQ inclusion to produce both over-inclusion and exclusion. Despite promoting LGBTQ "pride," the organization repeatedly engaged in exclusionary practices of deadnaming, misgendering, and outing of a trans* employee. Here, the conditions for recognition relied on normative organizational practices and hierarchical values of difference. In other words, trans* identity was seen as less valuable than gay or lesbian identity and more disruptive to organizational practices. The organization separated their branding and appropriation of queer products from the complex relations that accompany trans* inclusion.

A relational approach challenges the bifurcation of the self from the other in IDEA research and practice by reimagining this separation as mutual recognition. Thus, relationality recognizes the becoming of beings in their otherness. Difference is not about separation, but about connection, complexity, and "about responsibility and accountability for the lively relationalities of becoming, of which we are a part" (Barad,

2013, p. 69). We must take seriously the ways in which we categorize and construct the world. I now turn to relationality as way to approach the problems outlined within IDEA.

A Relational Approach to IDEA and Social Order

Among scholars interested in relational approaches to organizing and work, few have deployed relational thinking around inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (for exceptions see: Janssens & Stayaert, 2019; Gagnon et al., 2021). This paucity is interesting for two reasons. First, other disciplines, specifically indigenous studies, have long subscribed to relational and agent ontologies that focus on indigenous power, politics, and land rematriation (Rosiek et al., 2021). This suggests that relational approaches are capable of engaging critical issues in new and transformative ways. Second, "thingification," or the process of transforming relations into concrete entities (Barad, 2003), has led to a monolithic representation of IDEA as an object with an identifiable and determinate boundary. Yet, scholars continue to argue that such a "thing" is not capturable as an abstract concept (Christensen & Muhr, 2018; Zanoni & Janssens, 2015). This study joins a growing body of communication research that moves toward a more relational approach to IDEA (see Branton & Compton, 2021; Compton, 2017; Ferguson & Dougherty, 2021; Jones, 2020; Kenney, 2021; Mease, 2016).

Relationality is a broad paradigm with different theoretical assumptions (Gherardi, 2016). However, scholars have identified commonalities that cross various streams of knowledge throughout the social sciences in particular. Specifically, Kuhn, Ashcraft, & Cooren (2017) outline five premises of relationality that frame how I addresses the previously outlined problems within IDEA research and practice. I briefly

describe each premise here as a framework for why I will draw on practice theory, CCO, and affect theory in the proposed project.

Under the first premise, entities are emergent and constituted in and through relations. Entities in this context refers to anything that exists such that it is materialized in some form. However, the notion of existence is uniquely tied to relations. That is, entities do not preexist their relationship with other entities. Moreover, while entities may appear separate and stable with an inherent boundary, they are "not a thing, but a doing" (Barad, 2007, p. 151). Relations, then, are indeterminate, dynamic and performative. It is only when relations are produced and reproduced over time that they are read as stable. This relational thinking includes all entities (human and more than human) without reducing them to mere human discursive relations.

The second premise argues that the differential becoming of relations allows for any number of "realities" to take shape. When relational scholars speak about *the real*, they refer to the nature of being or reality. Under relationality, the real is multiple and constituted in enactments of practical accomplishment. As Kuhn et al (2017) articulate, multiplicity encompasses not only how to "look at something," but the "many ways to do something" (p.33). In this case, doings are understood as ongoing enactments located in practice. For this reason, relational approaches adopt what is commonly referred to as a *flat ontology*. Longstanding debates about agency-structure or micro-macro are abandoned by centering on the practical accomplishment of relations. A flat ontology argues that truths are understood as contextual, moment to moment and rooted in ordinary practice.

Third, as many relational scholars espouse (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015), discursive practices, have come to dominate depictions of organizational reality. *Discourse* is defined as the process of meaning construction through the use of symbols and language (Kuhn et al., 2017). However, relationality situates the social (meaning) and material (matter) together in an ongoing mutual constitution. Matter and mattering are key concepts that enjoin the social and the material. Here, matter represents production, constitution and what comes to matter in practices. From this purview, the material world is not simply foregrounded in an effort to reframe our analyses, but to demonstrate how "discourse is materially enacted in practice" (p.700).

Fourth, relationality rethinks agency as distributed, hybrid, and indeterminate. First, rather than positioning agency as something that entities "have", relationality argues that agency relies on the interdependence of sociomaterial actors. Here, it is important to understand that actions are not carried out by a single person, or entity. Instead, a multiplicity of sociomaterial (human and nonhuman), indeterminate actors emerge in the forming of relational practice. Next, because agency is distributed, humans no longer maintain primacy as the source of knowing, or as "the one in control of the world, the from whom intentional actions emanate" (Gherardi, 2019, p. 20). Instead, agency springs from the lively field of sociomaterial connections and relations.

The final premise rejects the Cartesian accounts of causality that dominate diversity research (see Gagnon et al., 2021; Dobusch, 2021). These accounts rely on an inherent distinction between subject and object. In particular, humans, in the cartesian sense, are often situated as "pure cause and pure effect" which situates action in a linear loop. For instance, the assumption is that diversity failures are strictly the cause of human

action. Yet, this simple reduction is partial and fails to attend to various relations that constitute how diversity is stabilized in practice. Relational scholars argue that decentering the human forces us to rethink causality as indeterminate, simultaneous, and hybrid.

Diversity and inclusion tend to conceptually presume separations and distinctions that reify inequality and social ordering. Relationality not only helps us understand how separation is enacted and reproduced in research and practice, but how we can rethink our ontological assumptions surrounding diversity and inclusion. To do this, I draw on three relational approaches to organizing. First, I draw on practice theory to explore how IDEA is produced in taken for granted practices. Second, I demonstrate how CCO frames connections and relations as materializing through communication. Finally, affect theory serves as a guiding force for how and why connections and practices come together through sensations, intensities, and forces.

Practice Theory

Among the scholars that adopt a relational approach to management and organizing, practice theorists represent a rich and theoretically vibrant starting point. I argue that diversity is an area that would benefit from a practice lens. Specifically, practice theory reshapes how we understand diversity, equity and inclusion by centering on how organizing and work are "made and remade in practice" (Maller, 2017, p.77). Relationality is central to practice theorizing because the world is conceived of as a connected network of sociomaterial practices. Much like relationality, practice theorists do not subscribe to a unified theory, but instead include multiple approaches with similarities and differences that contribute to a radical rethinking of social and

organizational life. The first generation of practice theorists from ethnomethodology such as Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984) and Schatzki (2010) were among the first to describe the world as a complex and durable set of practices centered around humans, while newer practice theorists such as Gherardi (2012), Reckwitz (2017), and Nicolini (2013) have expanded this theorizing to give equal weight to humans and nonhumans. In this way, practices become the unit of analysis, and knowledge is first and foremost located in practice, not in the heads of people where it can be transferred to others. Thus, practice theory offers scholars a way to understand relationality as contextual and applied. On the whole, there are five common threads among practice theorists.

First, Guzman (2013) notes consensus among practice theorists on the elements that constitute a practice: actions, bodies, context, artifacts, rules, symbols, text, discourse, and embeddedness. *Action* represents the achievement of doing, or that which is performed (Schatzki, 2010). *Bodies* are lively, sensing, and feeling beings made up of connections. *Context* is described as a socio-historical and situated resource for action. *Artifacts* refer to non-human and more-than-human objects. Gherardi (2019) defines *rules* as a "structured set of prescriptions structuring situations" (p. 179). Finally, *embeddedness* signifies how elements are "contained" within a practice and how a texture of practices are "contained" to form a larger structure. Second, practice theories view the world as an ongoing, performative accomplishment. In this way, social structures such as organizations exist and maintain durability through the production and reproduction of performance, activity or enactments. Thus, practices are processual in nature, and only made to seem stable through their ongoing accomplishment. Third, critical to practice theories are bodily and material matter in the becoming of the social world. Practices are

material and embodied routinized activity. Among practice theorists, activity and action are not inscribed on the body, but instead materialize through bodily enactment. Fourth, materiality constitutes the connectiveness between relations, activity, and ultimately, practices. Drawing on a relational approach, the social and the material are mutually constitutive. In fact, without objects, the social world would not exist and vice versa.

Gherardi (2012) argues that objects are not passive, but active participants in the accomplishment of practices. She describes this active engagement as 1) affiliative power, 2) enacting temporality, and 3) linking communities within a practice. First, affiliative power demonstrates how objects act together with other objects and humans to shape knowing and doing. Second, objects enact temporality in that they travel across space and time to shape and form practices. Third, communities within a practice are linked by way of objects. Behm-Morawitz & Villamil (2019) examined how an online diversity education program helped reduce intergroup biases. Here, the diversity training program exerts affiliative power in the form of customizable avatars that instructors can create to influence students' reception of the training; the training also travels across time in its ongoing usage throughout the university; and the training links communities within diversity practices. Finally, practices exist and evolve in historical and social contexts, and are shaped by a confluence of social forces such as power and control. They are negotiated, tension-filled, and disordering permutations that change and are always situated in activity.

Although practices have been tangentially examined within diversity research (see Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2011), IDEA practices have yet to be empirically foregrounded in practice research (for exceptions see Janssens & Stayaert, 2019; Gherardi, 2017). Two

considerations justify why a practice lens is necessary for rethinking diversity theorizing and practice. First, a practice lens reimagines diversity, inclusion and difference practices as sources of knowledge that are inseparable from doing. Here, doing represents action and activity. That said, knowledge about how to increase diversity, to be more inclusive, and understand difference are not located in the heads of individuals, but as a collective knowledgeable doing. Conceiving of practices as knowledgeable doing challenges universal guides and protocols of how IDEA should be enacted. As Gherardi (2019) contends "adopting a set of best practices on how to transfer (or not) knowledge could itself be risky for managers who then believe that knowledge can be treated as a commodity and easily moved around a network" (p. 385). Gherardi implies that context and enactment are abandoned for the sake of generalizable knowledge. Even critical scholars implicitly assume the cultivation of best practices surrounding IDEA (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019). Second, diversity research and practice are often concerned with salient enactments of diversity such as statements, strategic plans, initiatives, and trainings. Yet, a practice approach also focuses on the taken for granted practices that are naturalized over time. For those who experience marginalization and inequity, the sociomaterial consequences are prevalent such that the durability of injustice, discrimination, and whiteness endure (Nicolini, 2013). Moreover, a practice approach transcends the individual/organization dualism that permeates diversity research and practice. Individuals and organizations are capable of engaging in discrimination, but that social (dis)ordering relies on the reproduction of practices.

In short, practices are seen as modes of ordering sociomaterial elements into a coherent form that maintains a degree of spatial and temporal stability. Moreover,

practices are ongoing performative accomplishments that are connected to other practices. Based on these assumptions, I specifically draw on a Gherardi's (2019) posthumanist practice (PP) approach that embodies a relational epistemology where humans are situated in relation to "non humans, more-than-humans, the non-living world and all the missing masses" (p. 390).

Posthuman Practice Approach

Gherardi's posthuman approach is informed by actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) and by new materialists such as Orlikowski and Scott (2015), Barad (2007), and Haraway (1991). Posthumanism is an important distinction that seeks to decenter the human within practice theorizing where other scholarly orientations are more focused on humans (Schatzki, 2019). I will focus on the specific aspects of Gherardi's theorizing that are pertinent to this study. Essentially, Gherardi's approach to practice characterizes knowing and doing as entangled and suggests that knowing is located in practice. Again, thinking with a posthumanist approach explains knowledge as situated activity and not as an object. Practice is not only situated in activity, but it is a collective knowledgeable doing. Gherardi puts forth three concepts that undergird her theorizing: Situatedness, agencement and formativeness.

Situatedness. The notion of situatedness, defined as situated action or activity, is based on understandings of work as situated interaction (Goffman, 1959). However, situatedness illustrates how a confluence of actors, including objects, *intra-act* rather than interact within a practice. Intra-action, based on Barad's (2007) agential realism, dissolves the notions that entities exist outside of their relations to each other. Steeped in feminist theorizing, situatedness replaces objective rationality with situational logic

because, as Haraway (1991) contends, “only partial perspectives promises objective vision and Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object” (p. 583). For this reason, situatedness explains two important facets of Gherardi’s theorizing: the dynamic of context and how knowing or learning happens in practice.

First, Gherardi (2019) explains that work and organizing are located in a lively, dynamic context. Here, context is not a container where practices reside; it represents more than just a physical site where action happens. Instead, practices actively constitute and cultivate a performative context that must be understood along sociohistorical lines and as a “resource for action” (p. 45). Moreover, Gherardi offers the example of kayaking to understand how context shapes and influences knowing and doing. In this instance, the kayaker constructs a plan for navigating the river, but when rapids begin to surge, the kayaker abandons their plan, and relies on their skills. Thus, a plan is intended to predict action and later on justify action but is not a “mechanism generative of the action” (p. 47). In other words, Gherardi questions if knowledge precedes action. Instead, action manifests in situation and context based on a) an attention and awareness of actors’ interests and actions, and b) making sense of the opportunities within an environment.

Second, Gherardi discusses how knowing or learning happens in practice. Like Giddens (1984) structuration theory, practical knowledge is formulated as situated activity rather than as an object of knowledge. Working practices, then, are knowing how to make sense of the many differences that constitute practice within a context. Simply put, we learn by doing, and that doing produces more knowledge. Gherardi explains practices are recognized when they are socially sustained and reproduced over time. This

reproduction of practices illustrates appropriateness or how the norming of action in a context takes place. Essentially, the production of knowledge is contingent upon the context in which that knowledge is produced. Sociomateriality serves to uphold, knowledgeable doing within a context (such as a toilet vs a urinal in a bathroom). In other words, actions that take place in one instance, may not necessarily work in another context.

Agencement. The concept of agencement follows several key assumptions that underlie a posthuman practice approach. First, agencement is an important concept that illustrates the processuality of connections and relations that constitute practices. Agencement refers to the putting together, arrangement, or what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call "in connection with." Agencement is often conflated with the term assemblage. However, assemblage in French is synonymous with collage and understood as a stabilized heterogenous network of actors that exist in relation to each other. Gherardi (2016), proclaims that empirical use of the term assemblage fails to account for the ongoing processes of becoming and unfolding, connecting and relating in and through practices (Cooren, 2018). Callon (2013) offers a clearer explanation of agencement as the process of arrangement and specific action. Action stands out as a key aspect of interconnection that relies on temporality, activity and motion. Here, Gherardi (2016) relates the notion of becoming, agencement, and texture in describing how practices emerge:

> When we relate the idea of becoming to practices, we can say that what we call 'practice' is a heuristic move that de-territorializes and re-territorializes the unfolding of a flow of practicing. It is within practicing that connections are

> established and dissolved without a pre-defined order, and it is the process of agencement (of connecting with) that creates it. (p. 689).

In linking practices together, but also recognizing that those practices are sociomaterially comprised of a multiplicity of actors constituted *by* their connections, the notion of agency is uprooted and disordered. Moreover, the word agency is overtly present in this concept of agencement to demonstrate its accomplishment in and through connections. In a given practice, agency is not held by individuals or things, but is one of many agentic effects that emerge through the process of establishing connections.

As a researcher, agencement affords a way to "empirically follow and describe the process" of how practices connect (Gherardi, 2016, p 689). Within a posthumanist practice approach, associations are not isolated from their connections with other practices. It is in agencement that connection in and between practices are textured, bundled, and constellated. Gherardi (2019) defines texture as an interconnection of practices, where practices are anchored by other practices, and serve as a process of ordering and linking practices across space and time. Through agencement, connections are flattened out such that dualisms and hierarchies are destabilized and the "process of linking heterogenous elements" remain open-ended (p. 301).

Formativeness. While agencement signifies the process of connecting and relating, formativeness reveals the ways in which phenomena are formed within practices. The notion of formativeness was born from Pareyson's aesthetic philosophy where he is most concerned with production and the process of forming. Through formativeness, knowing is understood through doing whereby the doing also "invents the way of doing" (Gherardi, 2019, p. 279). Sociomateriality is central to formativeness

because the process of forming entails more than the act of reification; it is the process of forming of matter. In other words, the creation of how a practice is formed allows for a subsequent naturalizing where one can say "this is how it is done and how it has always been done." For example, we can say that the forming of difference in organizing and work are diversity management practices.

Gherardi (2016) explains formativeness as a process that involves a) activities that form work practices, b) the intended goals of the process, and c) the object of a practice. Taking inclusion as an example, the intended outcome of activities is inclusive practice. The activities that form inclusive practices vary, but common activities are developing inclusive statements, conducting trainings, employee resource groups, and committees. At the same time, the object of practice, also an epistemic object, is an inclusive organization, or more broadly inclusion. For Gherardi, objects of practice are emergent and changing. Formativeness is the effort to envision the object or thing, and knowledge relies on "seeing the thing formed" (p. 281). In this way, formativeness maintains a retrospective character similar to Weick's (1995) process of sensemaking which famously asked, "How do I know what I think, until I see what I say?" (p. 18). The ability to capture inclusion and equity as a thing that is formed remains especially difficult in practice. This difficulty rests on the struggle to see inclusion and equity formed as an object, despite its short-lived and inconsistent results (Nishii, 2017). For instance, Christensen and Muhr (2018) employed a psychoanalysis of diversity and inclusion practitioners across thirty-nine Danish organizations. They revealed that diversity practitioners experienced enduring anxiety as a symptom of Lacanian *lack* or void that accompanies diversity work. In other words, diversity embodies an emptiness that

"leaves it for others to assign meaning and value to it in order to give it form" (p. 115). Diversity emerged as an epistemic object, a "very specific thing" that in practice, remained elusive, and consistently broke down. Simply put, in the pursuit and desire for diversity, practitioners acknowledged they frequently fell short of intended goals. Ultimately, practitioners' anxiety surfaced in their ongoing pursuit to fill the organizational void around diversity and inclusion.

While Christensen and Muhr argue that there is a void in the concept of diversity that prevents it from being captured, formativeness explains two underlying issues. First, the notion of an accomplished form arises when the invention of how to do something is formed. In the case of diversity, scholars frequently point to the difficulties in forming a way of doing (see Tatli, 2011; Mease, 2016; Ballard et al., 2020). This struggle lies in the fact that the "way to do" diversity is complex and unstable. Second, repeated attempts to form the way of doing diversity have emerged as best practices approaches that "detach themselves from their creators and engender styles" that frequently overlook context (Gherardi, 2019, p. 281). For example, Ballard et al (2020) demonstrated how higher education follows a formulaic practice of producing diversity statements in response to stressors and events. In fact, they perform a generalized statement within the article to demonstrate how the practices of writing statements lack mention of contextual factors. Under formativeness, attempts to revise, alter, and improve diversity practices are furthered by the overwhelming desire to cultivate an ideal image of the thing, in this case, diversity and inclusion. As a result of context, the enactment of diversity and inclusion practices are always in transition and unfolding simply because who or what is included *or* excluded changes; For example, Dobusch (2021) explored how even in relational

approaches to inclusion, exclusion emerges in the neurotypical practicing of social relationships and belongingness. In effect, Dobusch found contexts that privilege normative forms of "being social" and forming relationships exclude autistic people who may struggle with communication and social interaction. In this way, inclusion must be understood as always partial. Here, the acceptance of inclusion as partial and never fully formed, hampers sensemaking efforts because the invention of doing diversity remains in a state of impermanence.

A posthumanist practice approach positions practice as a collective knowledgeable doing that is situated in activity. This was further understood through the concepts of situatedness, agencement, and formativeness. Situatedness signifies how practices create context and that knowing happens in situated activity. Agencement entails the process of expressing agency and connecting in action in and through practices. Formativeness is the process of knowing and doing that invents how to do something, and how practices are given form. Accordingly, situatedness reinvigorates context as situated action, agencement shows how connections form a texture of practices, and formativeness invokes how a texture of practices gives form to objects of practice or epistemic objects such as diversity, inclusion and equity. However, post-humanist practice theory is not without critique. Specifically, the role of communication and critical application within organization studies and management serve as two blind spots.

First, practice theorists frequently overlook the role of communication (Kuhn, 2021). For example, communication is situated as a discursive practice that happens alongside other practices within organizing (Gherardi, 2019). In practice theorizing,

communication is a key component of organizing, but is often limited to conversation, language, narratives, and meaning construction. Where posthumanist practice theory sees agencement as the process of connecting and relating practices, following Kuhn, Ashcraft, and Cooren (2017), I would argue that communication is how connections and relations materialize in and through practices and guide the trajectory of a practice.

Second, practice theories often struggle to provide a critical understanding focused on the production of inequity, exclusion, and power (Gherardi, 2009; Kuhn, 2021). Efforts to decenter the human are increasingly difficult simply because pursuits of social justice, diversity and inclusion are uniquely anthropocentric (Gherardi, 2019b). However, practice theorists have engaged in limited projects that interrogate and rethink the conditions of possibility in which ordinary practices produce persistent inequity. Recently, scholars such as Janssens and Stayaert (2019) have enjoined critical questions around diversity and inclusion such as discrimination and whiteness to the field of practice. CCO and affect theory address these limitations in practice theorizing by centering on power and social ordering. The next section demonstrates how CCO situates communication as the materialization of connection in and through practices.

Critical Questions Around Difference and IDEA in Communication

Organizational communication scholars have been interrogating difference and diversity related phenomena, with respect to gender since the 1980's (Ashcraft, 2011; Wood & Conrad, 1983). Allen's (1995) foundational article "diversity" and organizational communication called for a concerted focus on race and other aspects of difference. Outside of Allen (1996; 2011), it wasn't until the 2000's where the field of organizational communication began to take difference, outside of gender seriously

(Allen & Ashcraft, 2003). Feminist organizational communication research has been central to unmasking how difference constitutes work and organizing in the production and reproduction of power relations (Ashcraft, 2013; Dougherty & Harris, 2017). Recently scholars have called for more diverse theorizing around difference, diversity (McDonald, 2015), and marginality (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021) as constitutive of organizing. A relational approach provides one novel and important way to approach difference and IDEA in organizations. I argue that communication as constitutive of organizing (CCO), is a form of relational theorizing that positions communication as the materializing of connections in and through practices. Such an approach pushes the theorizing about difference forward to envision "new imaginaries of creation and connection, rooted in sociomaterial communicative practice" (Kuhn, 2021, p. 117). While practice theory explains how practices are situated, arranged and formed, a CCO framework explains how connections and relations that constitute practices are materialized through communication.

To illustrate how CCO thinking compliments practice theorizing, I first map out the primary assumptions that undergird CCO thinking. Next, I demonstrate how CCO thinking expands theorizing around difference and diversity. Finally, I draw on recent CCO theorizing to recenter power and frame communication as the materialization of connections in and through practices.

CCO Thinking

Communication constitutes organizing (CCO) represents a radical shift in the way we think about organizations. A central goal for CCO scholars has been to understand "what is an organization" (Kuhn, 2021). Instead of describing communication as the

medium through which information is transmitted, CCO posits that communication is axial to organizing. Communication, then, is the primary force of meaning-making and negotiation (Schoeneborn et al., 2019; Vásquez et al., 2016). CCO scholars recognize meaning as constitutive and as an outcome of communicative practices, and thus, organization. Furthermore, CCO scholars view communication on the same level as organization, and in fact, argue that organization only happens through communication (Grothe-Hammer & Schoeneborn, 2019). This line of thinking remains in stark contrast to the management and organization studies (MOS) configuring of communication. In these accounts, communication represents one of many activities or actions that take place within an organization. CCO not only challenges assumptions about communication but forces us to question the container metaphor and ask, "how is organizing accomplished, and what makes communicative practices more or less "organizational" (Schoeneborn et al., 2019, p. 477). In conjunction with practice theory, I argue that CCO demonstrates how communication is essential to a relational constitution of organizing.

Accordingly, there are three predominant schools of thought in CCO scholarship: the Four Flows Model (McPhee & Zaug, 2009),the Montreal School (Taylor & Van Every, 2000), and the Luhmannian approach (Schoeneborn, 2011). Rather than subscribe to any one approach **(**Schoeneborn et al., 2019**),** I briefly articulate the primary premises of CCO thinking outlined by Schoeneborn and Vasquez (2017). First, CCO scholarship has traditionally focused on communication events at the local level to ground analyses in situated practice. Events are characterized by their temporal and spatial conditions in which communication takes place. Second, CCO thinking broadens the epistemology of

organizational communication to enlist social (language, text, symbols) and material (objects, buildings, bodies) actors. Next, CCO scholarship subscribes to a relational constitution of communication with a multiplicity of contributing elements. Under this assumption, communication is both ordering and disordering because of the indeterminacy of meaning. Here, *ordering* signifies the ways in which meaning and matter are positioned as fixed whereas *disordering* speaks to instability and precarity of this process. CCO scholarship privileges how meaning construction is always emerging in sensemaking and collective action. Fourth, CCO scholars question assumptions around action and agency. In this way, nonhuman actors are always implicated in communication events such that who or what is acting is not "out there" but emergent. Fifth, CCO refrains from generalizing claims about communication and organizing. As such, analyses are concerned with situated activity and the plenum of actors that constitute communicative practices. Finally, CCO scholarship understand the ordering of situated action as organization (verb-noun), organizing (verb-verb), and organizationality (verb-adjective). This premise speaks to the inclusive nature of CCO thinking to include versions of communicative practice that account for the various states of situated action and meaning.

While these premises are not exhaustive, they provide a general connection between schools of thought and CCO scholarship. Moreover, CCO scholarship is not without its critiques. Namely, CCO scholarship has struggled to address critical issues in organizing (Reed, 2010) such as power and difference. Drawing on CCO thinking, I argue that CCO thinking complexifies difference and diversity by demonstrating how connections and forces materialize in and through practices (Kuhn, 2021; Mease, 2021;

Ballard et al., 2020). Unsurprisingly, CCO scholarship that addresses issues of difference and diversity is sparse. To that end, I offer an overview of the CCO literature on difference and diversity. Then, I discuss how recent theorizing of CCO, alongside practice theory, begins to take notions of power and difference seriously.

CCO Thinking and IDEA. Analyses examining diversity and difference from a CCO approach, while not absent, are exceedingly rare. That said, when scholars do appropriate CCO to study difference and diversity, they either subscribe to a particular school while utilizing other concepts or embody CCO thinking in their analyses. Moreover, these studies are largely concerned with language, discourse, and meaning. For instance, Mease (2016) adopted a "tensional" approach and McPhee and Zaug's (2009) Four Flows Model to understand tensions inherent to diversity work and demonstrate how diversity practitioners appropriated various discourses to enact organizational change.

Mease revealed that diversity practitioners embraced tensions within diversity work as a "productive paradox" to enact organizational changes. Diversity consultants utilized the business case and social justice case discourse together to gain organizational access and constitute the meaning of diversity. While this study demonstrated the complexity of diversity work in changing practices, the focus not only locates change in human action, but positions discourse and meaning at the center of change. In a similar vein, Trittin and Schoeneborn (2017) combined the Montreal School's CCO theorizing with Bahktin's conceptual framing of polyphony. Their work builds on the diversity management literature and critical diversity studies to envision diversity as the "plurality of different organizational and contextual voices" (p. 313). Through what they call a

Constitutive polyphonic perspective, difference and diversity are realized as communicative expression that takes place in communicative events. They assert that recognition of dissonant voices, opinions and backgrounds is necessary for constructing discursive diversity. However, this study attributes primacy to discursive diversity, while backgrounding the role of bodies, objects, history and power. More importantly, the authors diverge from Mease's article by overlooking sociohistorical context and arguing for a broadening of diversity as constitutive of everything while not attending to norms such as whiteness are recentered in organizing (Arcinega, 2021).

Furthermore, studies that employ CCO thinking have observed practices around difference and diversity. The previously mentioned Castor (2005) article demonstrated how a diversity curriculum requirement was discursively practiced at a university. Castor's study shows how CCO thinking can alter how difference is empirically examined. Although Castor foregrounds discourse, the practices surrounding the diversity are what stand out. For example, in the desire for consensus, the diversity requirement was diluted and ultimately left organizational members abject. In other words, power emerges in the desire for shared meaning. Nevertheless, much like early accounts of CCO, this study only accounts for human activity, but overlooks the role nonhuman actors played in constructing the diversity requirement,

In contrast, Mease and Terry (2012) offer a critical analysis of race and organizing through a CCO lens. Drawing on CCO thinking, they describe how discursive and material emergence of whiteness shaped bodies and performances during a Durham County school board meeting. By observing communicative events, in this case, school board meetings, they revealed how race was not fixed to bodies, but rather mapped on

particular bodies during the meetings. They found that practices of efficiency and efficacy, were routinely privileged over other performances often read as disruptive. They posited that performativity "brings into being the racialized identities, organizational structures, rules of order, rationalities and relationalities" (p. 127). In their analysis, members' embodied performances of tone and affect too worked to disrupt normative practices of whiteness. They exposed the contested nature of space, bodies, and discourses in organizing practices, while speaking to the embeddedness of whiteness as a dominant discourse. This study emphasizes how engaging with CCO can meaningfully contribute difference and diversity in research and practice. What is missing from this analysis is how these normative practices are formed, how they connect, and ultimately how they become durable. For instance, in their description of meeting space, we come to understand the physical layout of the sociomaterial elements and their relation to one another. However, we are not privy to how this meeting space forms into a durable practice of meeting.

It is clear that CCO scholarship offers glimpses of how scholars can rethink difference and diversity. Despite their insight, I argue that recent expansions of communication provide stronger theoretical conceptualizations for CCO thinkers.

Communication as the materializing of connections. Recent scholarship based on CCO thinking opens the door for a more accurate and ethical explication of difference and diversity. This scholarship pushes the conversations forward in three ways: attending to relationality in CCO thinking; decentering meaning as the primary goal of organizing and communication; and addressing the circulation of power.

First, although relationality serves as a core assumption within CCO theorizing, empirical analyses have struggled to embody this logic. Specifically, CCO thinking presumes organizational stability as its starting point (Mease, 2021). In essence, organizing does not precede action, but instead is the result of ongoing situated action that enlists a multitude of actors, and is contingent on the establishing of relations and connections. However, as Mease (2021) demonstrates, CCO scholarship must account for how entities are in and of themselves relations that connect to other relata and entities. Such thinking reactivates relationality and brings (dis)organizing back into the conversation. Entities, thus, are understood as relations, intermediaries, mediums, forces that are "coming and going" (p. 12). To understand why this shift is important, the second push forward requires decentering meaning from communication and organizing.

As CCO scholars have demonstrated, communication is the production and negotiation of meaning (Schoeneborn et al., 2019; Schoeneborn et al., 2011; Porter & Jackson, 2019). Unfortunately, recent scholarship problematizes this assumption and suggest that a singular focus on meaning emboldens separation between meaning and matter. Instead, Kuhn, Ashcraft, and Cooren (2017) conceptualize communication as relating/linking/connecting. In other words, communication not only materializes relations/connections, but happens within these connections as well. As such, relations are now constituted by the relationship of meaning and matter. Moreover, communication, then, is a "relational practice by which various beings relate to each other through other beings" (p. 72). Communication as relating/linking/connecting dissolves distinctions and relies on the embodiment of something or someone, performativity and materialization. Now, meaning becomes more than an articulation

through language, discourse, and talk, but is a "happening", a doing that materializes in communication (Kuhn, 2021, p. 115).

Finally, there have been several calls for CCO scholarship to take seriously the effects of power in disorganizing and communication (Reed, 2010). Recently, scholars have observed how the relationship between meaning and matter are not always equal, and thus, steeped in struggles (Gist-Mackey & Dougherty, 2020), instability (Mease, 2021), and becoming constraints (Kuhn, 2021). For instance, Mease (2021) draws on Deleuze to see power not as a force, but similar to Gherardi (2019) as the ability to connect:

> Analyzing power requires identifying forces and attending to the ways force comes together in relations of mutual influence (or not). Because how forces come together is a question of power, and realities emerge through the articulation of forces according to particular techniques, all acts of constitution are acts of power. The constitutive coming together of force—the actualizing process accomplished through multiple modes of communication—systematically produces and enhances some forces, while extinguishing, denying, and capturing others.

Forces based on Deleuze is the ability to affect and be affected. Here, actualizing, much like materializing, is the key to attending to power because power is the constitution of forces; communication, thus, is central to this constitution. In other words, assessing how relations are configured, come together, flow, and influence entities and reality reinvigorates communication. If we hearken back to formativeness, Gherardi (2019) posits that forming is nothing other than the power over "the material that opposes

resistance and enjoins obedience" (p. 286). In another way, Kuhn (2021) sees authority, power, and control in the process of delimiting. Delimiting, or agential cutting, are the construction of local boundaries that close off the possibility of becoming, of flow. Kuhn furthers that it is our response-ability, that is the ability to respond, to seek out and attend to these configurations, but also seek out efforts of "novel connection making" that are always and already becoming (p. 116).

In short, reimagining CCO thinking as relating/connecting/linking, and as sociomaterial forces of constitution shifts how we envision practices of inequity, whiteness, and normativity. Instead, they are instable constitutions that acquire durability. In addition, relations materialize in and through communication; they appear as a knotty relational complex whereby texturing, bundling and configuring of connections occur. A CCO approach builds on practice theory by reframing communication as practice. More specifically, CCO approach alongside practice theory focuses on the becomingness of the other, of difference and diversity. Organizational communication has produced great insight into understanding difference but has paid very little attention to how the configuring of difference *as* a relation is *also* steeped in relations, connections and forces that delimit the possibility of becoming and novel connection making. Under CCO and practice theory, difference and diversity are 1) understood as relations, connections, or forces, 2) materialize in and through communicative practices, and 3) constitute "(un)stable, meaningful, material" realities. That said, I argue that difference and diversity rely on the capacity to flow, or the moving and producing of novel connections that constitute practices. How should flow be imagined, then? In conjunction with Massumi (1995), I view flow as the ability to affect and be affected.

Affect Theory

Practice and communication scholars alike have asserted that relational thinking must consider the role of affect in the flow of relations that produce social order (Ashcraft, 2017; Gherardi, 2016; Mease, 2021). If practices are collective knowledgeable doings that are connections in action, and that connections and relations materialize in and through communication, then *affec*ts are forces of bodily excitation and intensity that connects actors in a "co-subjective circuit of feeling and sensation" (Fotaki et al., 2017, p. 4). I draw on Massumi's (2015) understanding of affect as the bodily capacity to affect and be affected. In this sense, affect is concerned with bodily encounters of feeling and emotion that flow, force, or move simply because "when you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected" (p. 4). Massumi's work on affect stems from Spinoza's focus on the body. This understanding of affect transcends common assumptions of affect as a personal feeling or something that a person has. Affect is simultaneously pre-personal and transpersonal such that it "transcends the view of the body as an object and instead emphasizes the temporality of embodiment" (Gherardi, 2019, p. 271). Instead, affect circulates between and through objects, bodies, ideas, spaces, and the rhythms of practice. Affect is about the capacity for becoming, belonging, recognition, and connection; it is about "the openness of situations and how we live that openness" (Massumi, 2015, p. 6). I argue that affect challenges our assumptions to produce a formed thing, a desirable utopia, but instead directs us to create more possibilities and more equitable encounters. In this section, I first position affect alongside communication and practice. Then, I address affect and emotion within

diversity and difference. Lastly, I explore the affective politics of diversity and difference.

Enjoining Affect, Communication, and Practice

The literature on affect theory is wide and varied stemming mostly from cultural studies, humanities, and psychology; organizational communication scholars have yet to take affect seriously (see Mumby, 2019; Ashcraft, 2017), while management and organization studies scholars have only begun to centralize it in their work (Fotaki & Pullen, 2019; Gherardi, 2016; Reckwitz, 2016). Similarly, diversity and difference research tends to cast emotion and affect as given, without considering their connection to organizational realities. Diversity and difference is an ineffable feeling that is laden with affect (Christensen & Muhr, 2018). That said, affect offers three important connections to CCO and Practice theory in exploring difference and diversity.

First, affect is more than its arrangement as a noun, but operates as a verb. In this way, affect is the capacity *to* affect something and *be* affected by something. This framing serves to revive the body as more than cognition, language, and meaning. Affect circulates as bodily encounters where the body is lively, feeling, sensing with energy, intensity and excitation. At the same time, affect concerns both human and nonhuman "bodily capacities (i.e. increase or decreases)" in producing states of arousal and sensations directed at a given person, object or idea (Katila et al., 2020, p. 1313; Reckwitz, 2017). Affect also opens the door for communication to account for the sensory transmission of language and meaning and the constitution of relational encounters (Kuhn et al., 2017).

Next, affect demonstrates how connections and relations form, configure, and most importantly, how they stick. I specifically draw on Stewart's (2007) notion of ordinary affects to understand how the configuring and stickiness of relations and connections happens in mundane practices that move and shift:

> Ordinary affects, then, are an animate circuit that conducts force and maps connections, routes, and disjunctures. They are a kind of contact zone where the overdeterminations of circulations, events, conditions, technologies, and flows of power literally take place (p. 3).

Ordinary affects demonstrate how even taken for granted practices with which we engage resonate with intensity, energy, and feeling. For example, ordinary affect would situate heteronormativity as something other than a grand monolith from above but flows through the ordinary practices of daily life. *Affect flows in and through practices to make them resonate and endure and appear natural and fixed.* Thinking back to formativeness, to invent the way of knowing and doing, we must see the thing formed. However, seeing a formed thing also relies on affective engagement with the thing. For example, some practices of inclusion have been formed, such as employee resource groups (ERGs). ERGs are intended to provide employees with feeling and a sense of belonging. Yet, as Dennisen et al (2018) demonstrates, ERGs often reinforce fixed identities and marginalization. What circulates here are the feelings that are difficult to signify such as belongingness and recognition. These practices fail to stick or gain significance and bodily excitation. Moreover, Ahmed (2014) refers to the stickiness of affect as that which incites arousal, but also produces boundary conditions and perceptions of fixity. In other words, affect demonstrates how *connections and relations are configured, formed and stick to certain bodies over others.* Why is it that certain doings stick, and others are dismissed? For Ahmed, affect sticks to certain bodies,

relations, and practices when they are attached to signs and figures. For instance, what happens when the lone faculty member of color in a department brings up anti-blackness in a faculty meeting, but is told that anti-blackness is something that the diversity committee will address. Here, affect demonstrates how relations are configured, moved, and situated as something for a specific committee to do, not the entire faculty. Reckwitz (2016) describes this as built-in-motivation that lies within practices. Largely focused on humans, Reckwitz suggests motivation requires the ability to be affected. For this reason, affect incentivizes participation in an activity, in a practice.

Finally, affect is about possibility, movement, potential and disruption. In other words, affect involves becomingness and where novel connections become possible. For this reason, affect shows where and how things come together, why connections are made, but also how connections might happen, or "what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow present in them in a state of potentiality and resonance" (Stewart, 2007, p. 3). Affect challenges boundary conditions because those conditions of possibility that may seem closed off also rely on the affective resonance that can also connect and relate through intra-active encounters. As Massumi (2015) denotes, affect exposes the "margin of maneuvarability" in and through potential connections and realities. This potentiality centers on the moving and doing of situated encounters. Massumi uses the example of how anger are affective expressions that can punctuate a situation beyond articulation. When this happens, the body begins to think, make judgements, and a reconfiguring of the situation also happens.

Affect, Emotion, and IDEA

Within the literature, the distinction between affect and emotion is complex. Namely, Reckwitz (2017) considers affect and emotion together, while also acknowledging the

historical usage of emotion in social science as a subjective experience. However, some scholars argue distinguishing the two is necessary because emotion represents a state of affect, whereas affect is the intensity that flows in and through relations. Others see emotion as the social uttering of feelings (Gherardi, 2017), and as an intersubjective capturing of affect (Katila et al., 2020). More specifically, Massumi (2015) describes emotion as a momentary capturing of affect; emotion represents a limited expression of the depth of experiences. Emotion, to a degree, "filters events into feelings" because emotion situates entities as separate, individual feelings (Ashcraft, 2017). In contrast, Ahmed (2014) refrains from distinguishing between emotion and affect since emotions are sensed. Ahmed uses pain to illustrate how the pre-personal, unconscious flow of affect is often mediated by past emotional experiences and histories. In this study, I understand emotion as the symbolic capturing of affect. However, this capturing is momentary because affect circulates, changes and moves in and through relations and practices that produce social order.

Research suggests how the emotional and historical resonance of discrimination, oppression and inequality is stripped from discussions about diversity in organizations (Perriton, 2009; Ahonen et al., 2014). Scholars such as Reckwitz (2017) argue that diversity and difference research is a perfect example of the affective neutrality within organization studies. Brewis (2017) argues that the emotional constitution of diversity practices are removed from diversity work and interventions as a way to make these efforts more palatable. For this reason, practices of the business case depoliticize diversity by marginalizing emotional intensity of social justice discourses; this boundary condition drives actors' affective reactions to difference and even limits their emotional expression. As Mikkelsen and Whalin (2019) examined, organizational efforts that discursively positioned diversity as beneficial and good for the organization, privilege

certain emotions over others. At the center of this "emotional control," the taken for granted practices around organizational performance remained unquestioned. Although the organization was praised for bringing in different backgrounds, they observed that foreign born employees were relegated to entry level positions and openly discriminated against because they weren't "Danish" enough. What's more, these same employees were routinely discouraged from expressing emotions that contradicted a positive view of diversity.

Next, studies that address emotion tend to focus on specific emotions such as fear and anxiety and are often associated concerned with diversity work and diversity practitioners. Importantly, within IDEA, emotion is positioned as a "thing out there" or as an abstract discursive practice (Christensen and Muhr, 2018). For instance, Schwabenland and Tomlinson (2015) utilized action research to explore the emotional experiences that characterize diversity practitioners' enactments. In effect, diversity practitioners fears and anxieties in the "saying, doing, and believing" constrained their ability to affect organizational change. At the same time, practitioners viewed themselves as infallible subjects. Yet, there was a persistent fear that exploring emotions in diversity work "may not be containable" (p. 1931). This study demonstrates how emotion often reflects the capturing of affect, even with respect to diversity and difference. This study suggests that efforts to reach a utopian vision of diversity are inherently elusive because of the affective resonance that is political, shifting and reconfiguring. We can see based on these studies how even the symbolic capturing of affect, emotion, is historically detached from both diversity research and practice.

Affective Politics and Diversity

Ahmed (2014) asks a question that characterizes diversity research and practice: "Why is social transformation so difficult to achieve?" (p. 12). The affective politics of diversity and difference offers a good starting point. Diversity is political because configurations and connections are shaped by late-stage capitalist relations (Fotaki & Pullen, 2019). For Massumi (2015), the politics of affect involves disruptions and configurations that directs attention and energies to events, connections, objects, bodies and practices. In this way, *affective attunement* represents the capacity for sensing, discerning, and cultivating, and the "nudging along, budding promises that glimmer beyond articulation" (Kuhn et al., 2017, p.64). However, attunement only flourishes in the ordinary, the mundane practices which is key to affective politics. Within the ordinary, affective politics surge as distinctions between good and bad stick to certain bodies and not others. This stickiness is what makes things *feel* dominant and paralyzing. In fact, Stewart's (2007) theorizing of ordinary affect further demonstrates how stickiness emerges in the mundane fine-grained enactments. For Stewart, affective politics are not about textured, durable instantiations "way downstream"; Instead, politics are the "open question of what counts as an event, a movement, an impact, a reason to react" (p. 16). In short, affect determines what comes to matter in a situation, directs our attention, and determines how and what relations and connections endure across space and time.

Research shows that reactions to even mundane practices are the result of affective politics that emerge in the ordinary. For instance, Skoglund and Holt (2021) developed an "hir" toilet to disrupt the notion that unisex bathrooms are fully inclusive. Here, the ordinary practice of using the bathroom is disrupted. They transformed a unisex

toilet, within an engineering department, into a "third" space to challenge existing reliance on gendered binary practices. The hir-toilet represented an unrealized, undefined third gender and thirdspace "open to all potential genders, or even no gender" (p.3). While the previous toilet came off as sterile and neutral, the hir-toilet created an atmosphere that challenged traditional practices of inclusion:

> The transformation included: colourful towel, full body mirror, shaving and make-up mirror, a bench and glass shelves, so called queer magazines shelved on a small wicker table (and a donated book 'How gentlemen dress' that subsequently disappeared), incense oil, plastic flowers, deodorant, hair styling gel, nail polish and 'vanity' boxes etc. collected from conference hotel bathrooms. Bodily needs were also addressed by adding razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste and hand cream. Female body fluids were in addition acknowledged in the provision of sanitary towels, pantyliners and tampons. (p. 8).

They observed how something as mundane as a toilet resonated in unexpected ways that spurned visceral reactions from organizational and community members. The toilet was discursively positioned as unnecessary, disruptive, overly political and reinforcing. In fact, the researchers observed how the university HR department, described as "equality specialists," relied on rational institutional practices to repeatedly undermined the projects resource allocation, and pushed it back to the ordinary by ceasing operation of the hir-toilet. In this way, the emotional and ordering force of affect circulated in the habitual practices of knowing and doing. The affective politics of diversity entails attending to wordings that are produced in ordinary practices. According

to Stewart (2007), “There’s a politics to difference in itself—the difference of danger, the difference of habit and dull routine, the difference of everything that matters.” (p. 16).

Conclusion

In this chapter, IDEA and difference are viewed as a relational connection. This project joins together three areas of relational theorizing to challenge the separability within diversity research and practice. First, I explore how practice theory locates diversity and difference in situated activity, taken for granted practices, and the knowing and doing of realities. I specifically attend to a posthumanist practice approach that centers, situatedness, agencement and formativeness to understand practices as sociomaterially constituted and connected in action. For this reason, I argue for a CCO thinking that reimagines communication as the ongoing materialization of connections and relations that decenters meaning. Finally, I situate affect as a flow of intensities that reconfigure connections and bodily capacities to affect and be affected. Based on this thinking I ask the following research questions:

Research Questions:

RQ1: How do ordinary practices and IDEA practices produce and sustain social (dis)order?

RQ2: How does affect configure and reconfigure bodies and practices?

RQ3: How do connections and relations materialize through communication?

Chapters 3: Methodology and Methods

The purpose of this study is to rethink IDEA as relational connection in a way that pushes back on the prevailing ontology of separation. In doing so, this study explores 1) how IDEA is constituted through taken for granted practices, 2) how communication materializes connections in and through practices, and 3) how the capacity to affect and be affected configures and reconfigures relations that constitute practices. In my review of the extant literature, I found that IDEA research primarily focuses on individuals and discourse (Janssens & Stayaert, 2019) while backgrounding the confluence of actors that come to matter in everyday practice. That said, my goal is not to produce a comprehensive theory about IDEA. Rather, I am interested in the mundane, the affective flow, and the sociomaterial production and reproduction of social (dis)order. As previous research suggest, IDEA research and practice are always messy and precarious in their production and reproduction (Schwabenland & Tomlinson, 2015). Thus, to explore IDEA practices as relational connection requires two efforts. First, I call into question traditional ways of researching, collecting, and gathering data. I do not argue for the abandonment of traditional research practices but rather hope to expand the scope of research practices surrounding IDEA. As Jackson & Mazzei (2012) suggest, relational disposition invites "cutting into the center, opening it up to see what newness might be incited" (p. viii). Second, a relational approach seeks to dissolve boundaries that implicate researchers, participants, and environments. In this way, ontology, epistemology, and axiology are not separate methodological assumptions, but entangled in an ongoing process of knowing and doing.

To that end, this study seeks to explore IDEA as connection by embodying relational sensibilities. I outline these methods by first, briefly centering my study within the philosophical commitment akin to *post-humanist* paradigms. Specifically, I touch on relationality, posthumanism and Barad's (2007) notion of onto-ethico-epistemology. Second, I introduce methodological thinking of praxiography and affectography as suitable starting points. Third, I offer a description of the research context at a College of Veterinary Medicine. Fourth, I outline my process of data collection that attends to practices, affect, and communication. Finally, I explain how I analyzed the data through an iterative approach and Visual Network Analysis.

Paradigmatic Commitments

Throughout the literature review, I demonstrate the entangled messiness that accompanies relational thinking but elaborate on two necessary commitments: posthumanism and onto-ethico-epistemology. For this study, I propose adopting a posthumanist approach that seeks to decenter the human subject as the sole agentic force in the world. This endeavor is not meant to ignore the role of humans but to render them on equal footing with other beings (non-human, more than human) in the research process. In this way, humans and non-humans constitute realitie(s) that are emergent, ongoing, and dispersed (Tracy, 2020). Research from this purview understands that capturing a defined reality is impossible because reality is emergent and unstable. A researcher can only hope to garner a portion of reality based on conditions of possibility that are enacted. Moreover, posthumanism is especially concerned with the synthetic bifurcation of life into dualisms such as nature and culture (Gherardi, 2019). Based in performativity, posthumanist understandings disrupt the subject/object divide that

permeates research practices. This disruption comes to bear in research surrounding IDEA whose roots are firmly entrenched in humanism (Fotaki & Pullen, 2019). In IDEA, the focus on biological essentialism has historically been necessary to combat the dehumanization of marginalized bodies (Dobusch, 2021). However, there is also a gravitation toward a world beyond human where gender, race, ability, and sexuality are, as Gherardi (2019) suggests, "not a difference from other bodies but a difference that emerges from within the individuating body as a material discursive process" (p. 44).

Second, Barad (2003) attempts to transcend distinctions surrounding philosophical commitments related to ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Here, Barad is wholly concerned with rethinking the "inherent" separability of knowing, being, and ethics. Instead, the practice of knowing, being, and ethics are constitutively entangled as ethic-onto-epistemology. First, to separate knowing and being is to assume a distancing that privileges researchers, subjects, and most importantly, humans. *Entanglement* enables us to attend to things that get excluded and come to matter, especially in our research practices. Most importantly, as researchers we become accountable for the marks left on bodies. In other words, we are mutually implicated in the process of knowing in being. As Barad expresses "knowing is a direct material engagement, a cutting together-apart, where cuts do violence but also open up and rework the agential conditions of possibility" (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p. 52). Similarly, ethics are often relegated as an afterthought in research practices. Barad elaborates that ethics, in scientific research, rely on "imagined consequences" that have already taken place. Ethics are inseparable from knowing and being.

Within the area of IDEA, an ethic-onto-epistemology is especially important because it requires an acute attention to the consequences of difference in both practice and research. Since diversity is largely concerned with the inclusion of marginalized bodies, our role as researchers is not to "stand outside" of this experience, but to remain grounded in possibility and justice. Relational thinking is more than a "tool" for research, but implicates all things, including the researcher, in emergent encounters. As Derrida (1993) argued "No justice […] seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present" (p. xviii). These posthumanist ethic-onto-epistemological commitments inform the project detailed in the following section.

Praxiography and Affectography

Praxiography

Ethnography of practices or praxiography, takes practices as the unit of analysis to cultivate "a story about practices" (Gherardi, 2019, p. 742). Praxiography coined by Annemarie Mol (2002), was born out of her ethnographic study of a patient's body and its disease. Mol studied how a patient's body emerged differently within different practices. In this case, Mol followed both a body and a disease as they moved between hospital wards. Mol is wholly concerned with objects, but not in the static, preexisting, and defined way. Instead, Mol focuses on how bodies and disease emerge as different objects within practices. Gherardi (2019) argues that praxiography offers three guiding principles. First, in fieldwork, there must be a reflexive understanding of practices as patterned and situated action. This includes centering on the practices observed in fieldwork and the *ethnographer's* practice. Second, practice is an epistemological undertaking that displaces privileging of the human. Instead, the praxiographer is

concerned with the constitutive entanglement of bodies, materialities, and discourses and their agentic emergence. Lastly, the process of writing practices is destabilized such that it "communicates to the reader the sense of indeterminacy and open-endedness of everyday practicing" (p. 331).

In a similar vein, ethnography of the object (Bruni, 2005) demonstrates how shadowing an object can guide the researcher and expose the unfolding of relations that connect practices and a multiplicity of actors. Through praxiography, the ethnographer attends to the sociomaterial practices that enact and constitute relations and connections. Here, praxiography requires the reimagining of interpretation and storytelling that demonstrate how an object performs and unfolds in and through practices (Gherardi, 2019, p.346). For example, the researcher could stand in a single space to see how a particular practice is produced and reproduced. In this project, IDEA as form of practice emerges differently depending upon the practices and context in which they are performed. Latham (2017) conducted an autoethnographic praxiography as a trans* patient. Specifically, Latham explored how ordinary treatment practices produced particular relations about sex and trans* identity while enacting boundary conditions that limited new possibilities. All told a praxiographer explores the ways in which given practices configure a "provisionally bounded object" (Gherardi, 2019, p.350).

Affectography

While praxiography centers on practices, affectography foregrounds the researcher's capacity to affect and be affected through the interpretation process (Gherardi, 2019; Katila et al., 2020). In this way, affectography does not serve as a way to "study" affect. Instead, affectography is a knowledgeable doing that implicates the

researcher's body as a resonant source connected to other bodies (human, non-human, more than human). Affectography asks, "What happens to us, as persons and as researchers, when we put ourselves inside the practices we study?" (p. 354). At its core, affective ethnography, in line with post methodologies, seeks to problematize our framing of "data," "method," or "observation" (Tracy, 2020; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). For Gherardi (2019), the researcher must attend to the ordinary affects that describe our "being with, being in between, becoming with" (p. 746). Within affective ethnography, there are three pillars that Gherardi outlines as central to this style of fieldwork.

First, a key concept within affectography is the notion of *embodiment*, or what is referred to as *embodied knowing*. Here, the body represents the production of situated activity such that "we are bodies, rather than having bodies" (p. 747). Most importantly, bodies represent a resonant materiality where affect is not located in the individual, but as a flow of intensity that constitutes realities. Specifically, affectography recognizes that bodies intra-act based on *attunement*. Here, attunement represents mood, or the transmission of feeling that permeates spaces between bodies and objects that work to orient and configure ordinary actions and practices. Gherardi offers the example of a woman stuck in an elevator with her male boss, who proceeded to ignore her entirely. This example demonstrates how the woman experienced bodily excitation that compelled her to avoid eye contact.

Next, Gherardi argues for an attention to space and affective placeness. In this way, spaces are central to the flow of affect. In the elevator story, the space of the elevator affected how the bodies intra-acted. Affective placeness demonstrates how practices and connections form, gather, and stick within a place. As such, connections

and practices are enacted based on the potentialities of that space. In other words, the potentialities are fully contingent on affective atmospheres that engulf people, things, and environments. Thus, researchers must attend to placeness, their role in a space, and the affective atmospheres that (dis)organize life worlds. For example, Branton & Compton (2021) demonstrate how the affective atmosphere of gay bars as sexually open spaces allowed for the enactment of practices of sexual assault and harassment. The atmosphere within gay bars is attuned to a liberatory and "safe" space for queer bodies.

Third, affectography focuses on the researcher's capacity to act within an entanglement of practices. Like any practice, ethnographic practices are subject to the production of a particular social order. Rather than discuss the researcher's presence as objective, passive, or active, Gherardi suggests a focus on performativity and experimentation that "make things happen' and in so doing question, provoke, interrupt us, what exceeds current understanding, and conventional ethnographic writing." (p. 754). This does not mean that conventional writing methods are left by the wayside but that researchers should account for the intensity and feeling of the researcher's experience.

Affectography supports the potential for new forms of doing and novelty in how we intra-act within practices and organizations (Katila et al., 2020). For example, crystallization (Ellingson, 2009) incorporates performative forms of writing such as poetry, dialogue, vignettes, and narratives that reflect the bodily sensation and intensity taking place. In another example, Hulton & Introna (2018) utilized photography throughout their study on Swedish migration centers as a form of performative engagement in the flow of practice. In using photographs, they were able to demonstrate

how the sociomaterial constitution of migration centers affected asylum seekers' experiences. Most importantly, the authors included the photographs in their analysis and writing.

In short, affectography situates the researcher as embodied and performative with an awareness of their capacity to affect and be affected. This shift takes research as an intra-active process where the researcher produces and is produced by the data. In other words, ethnography becomes a matter of concern or care, rather than a matter of fact. The researcher's capacity to *affect* is necessary for exploring IDEA practices, especially because the primary focus is on marginalized bodies. For example, I chose not to disclose participants' demographic information out of concern for their anonymity. Similarly, as a black, gay male who is neurodiverse, my capacity to be *affected* is integral to understanding how IDEA are produced and reproduced in ordinary practice.

At this point, I have addressed my paradigmatic commitments and the methodological foundations that center on practices and affective flow of intensity that configures and reconfigures connections. Based on this thinking, I conducted a 10-month study of observing, interviewing, and examining documents at a college of veterinary medicine. Next, I briefly describe the research context, before discussing the forms of data collection for the project and the methods of analysis.

Research Context

In this study, I conducted observation, interviews, and collected documents at a midwestern college of veterinary medicine, here referred to pseudonymously as Midwest U. College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) or colloquially as "the vet school." Veterinary medicine at the Midwest U began in 1887, but the College of Veterinary Medicine was

founded in 1910. It was not until 1946 that the college developed educational opportunities that led to a DVM degree. Since 1946, the college has graduated over 4,000 veterinarians. Within the college, there is a building that houses didactic classrooms and administrative offices, a diagnostic laboratory, and a fully functioning teaching hospital that serves the region and several other states across the Midwest.

Midwest U. remained fully segregated until the early 1950s when it was compelled by a string of court decisions to admit its first black students. It was not until 1970 that the first black student graduated from CVM. On their website, the college documents that the first female veterinarian graduated in 1952 and the first female dean was appointed within the last five years. Admissions documents for the college do not provide data about the racial makeup of incoming classes, but based on my interviews and observations, the CVM mirrors broader trends in the profession with very few non-white students, faculty, or staff. Documents do show clear trends with respect to gender with over 80% of incoming students identifying as female.

The College of Veterinary Medicine provides a unique site for studying diversity particularly because the connection to nonhuman animals is overt and foundational to the profession. In addition, there are several IDEA initiatives and student groups within the college that support students of diverse backgrounds. Like many departments on campus at Midwest U., the college expresses a commitment to diversity and inclusion within the school and the profession.

Data Collection Methods

In this project, I utilized fieldwork, interview methods, and document analysis that attend to what Janssens & Stayaert (2020) call *connected situationalism*. Connected

situationalism focuses on local practices that are connected in action. The researcher is faced with a central question about what to observe and what relevant practices are connected and bundled together. Throughout the data collection process, it was important that I remain open to how things emerged and were attuned in a particular practice. I was acutely aware that a project like this one would change and unfold throughout the process. Consistent with this expectation, my data collection began to pull my attention in new and unexpected directions.

Participant Fieldwork

With fieldwork, the researcher works to immerse themself in the environment by watching, listening, and asking questions about the culture being observed. As a researcher, I have developed a wealth of knowledge about IDEA practices, but I thought it was essential that I enter the scene with a degree of naïveté rather than assuming I knew what trajectories would emerge. As Ashcraft (2017) notes, every encounter is indeterminate and produces new possibilities and connections that require our attention. Ethnographic fieldwork is a deeply personal, collective, and performative process that affects each researcher differently. It speaks to what Jensen et al. (2020) describe as moment-to-moment "identity construction that will generate connection and separation, failure and success" (p. 145). In my case, I assumed the *play* participant role. The play participant has the flexibility to engage in organizational cultural practices, but also step out of the scene to take fieldnotes (Tracy, 2020). Play participants are affectively attuned to others within the scene, and often do as others within the scene do. This tactic helps the researcher become emotionally enmeshed within the organizational fabric. As a play participant, I was equipped to understand the cultural values and practices of the CVM,

while also asking critical questions that assessed the scene (Tracy, 2020). In this role, I vacillated between being actively involved in practices, such as participating in the Veterinary Student Orientation (VSO), to standing back and observing ordinary practices like dental surgeries or the interactions with clients in intake rooms at the teaching hospital.

An early contact at the CVM introduced me to faculty, staff, and students and directed me to practices that could serve as a starting point for my fieldwork. Over the first four weeks of the project, I had meetings with this contact about the CVM structure, practices, and culture. My contact then guided me on a tour of both the didactic building and the diagnostic lab. After a month of meetings, my first major observational event was at the Veterinary Student Orientation (VSO). VSO is an intensive four-day experience where first year students are oriented to the culture and practices of the CVM. My presence at VSO spawned several connections with various actors, many of which I did not anticipate. During the first day, a presenter introduced me and my project to the entire orientation of around 200 people. By the end of the day, I had made connections with ten different individuals interested in speaking with me about DEI and my research project.

My connections to those individuals allowed me to observe several DEI meetings, multiple well-being days on clinical rotation, a white coat ceremony, didactic classes, and community outreach and engagement efforts. After five months, I gained access to the teaching hospital and diagnostic lab. There I was able to observe ordinary practices such as surgery, intakes, exams, consultations, and clinical teaching. For instance, one of the common practices within the teaching hospital were *rounds*. Rounds are meetings that operate as a way for a clinician, residents, interns, technicians, and students to talk

through cases for that day and discuss any issues that might arise. Alongside observation in the teaching hospital, I had biweekly meetings with a hospital administrator to discuss what I was seeing in the field and to direct me to areas of concern. Finally, I moved back into a participant role when I was asked to teach CVM students in their second year about DEI and veterinary medicine in a two-hour class on business and professional management in veterinary medicine.

As I was immersed in the field, I was able to document my experiences by jotting down field notes on my phone so as not to be intrusive. I did not want to make participants feel as if they were under a microscope. For instance, during VSO, I observed CVM faculty meetings with incoming students to orient them to their teaching styles. Here, my notes ranged from "discussed how perfection isn't attainable, but that the goal is to get close" to "physiology described as the most important course in vet school" to "I just avoided sitting with the other black staff member because I was nervous about how it would be perceived." After leaving the site, I quickly audio recorded field notes rather than writing them out within thirty-six hours of observation. As a neurodiverse person, I often found it challenging to write my thoughts in a linear, coherent format. Detailed audio recordings proved more efficient as a means of documenting my experiences and observations. I then transcribed my audio recordings and combined them with my jottings from field notes to create as much description as possible. Overall, I engaged in 195 hours of observation over a 9-month period. My fieldnotes totaled 202 single-spaced pages.

Visual Network Analysis Data Collection

One of the difficulties with practice and affect studies is determining where to start and how to attend to the evolving texture of practices within an organizational context. To overcome this difficulty, I turned to Decuypere (2020) Visual Network Analysis (VNA) for qualitative research as a relational method for "qualitatively analyzing social situations by constructing, analyzing and interpreting visual networks based on tailored observatory and/or interview techniques" (p. 73). VNA allows for the comprehensive collecting and tracking of practices. VNA is primarily concerned with the composition of a practice and how that practice produces particular conditions of social order. While a network can produce endless numbers of connections and relations, it is important to note that any starting point or end point represents an agential cut that produces a particular kind of encounter, reality, or social order (Barad, 2007). For example, Decupere utilized VNA to explore academic practice. Early in my data collection, I sought to show how sociomaterial elements within a practice were formed, and how practices were connected to other practices. However, accounting for the plethora of sociomaterial elements for every practice that I observed proved too daunting. As Decuypere notes, the number of actors within a practice can add up quickly. Rather than focusing on the visualization of the entire network of practices within the CVM, I centered on three specific events that were acutely resonant: two DEI meetings and a mental health presentation.

For these three events, I collected data using an open-ended protocol for observation that mapped the actors and relations within a scene or practice. I provided an example of my observation protocol in APPENDIX A. The observation protocol is conducted based on *thick* description. Here, thickness refers to detailing as many actors

and relations as possible within a practice (Decupere, 2020). Thus, I took extremely detailed notes of the actors who were present and the intra-action between actors. Actors emerged from interviews and observations. For this study, I first had to list all the actors within a particular practice or scene. Actors represented both human and non-human entities that came to matter in these events or practices. For example, "time" and "speaker" both came to matter in a VSO presentation. Thus, "time" and "speaker" were listed as actors within the practice. After listing all the actors, I then recorded and captured the intra-actions between actors. Relations referred to intra-actions between two or more actors within a practice. I relied on audio recordings, fieldnotes, and interview transcripts to generate a detailed representation of the scene.

Interviews

Interviews functioned as an important source for understanding how individuals made sense of a given situation that would be difficult to access from observation alone. Tracy (2020) articulates three valuable reasons for conducting interviews. First, interviews are great for information gathering and sensemaking. Second, interviews help to obtain specifics within given practices. Third, interviews provide a means for comparing data to observation and other forms of collection. For this project, I conducted three types of interviews: field, semi-structured, and interview to the double (ITTD).

Field Interviews. First, as an initial form of information gathering, field interviews helped to establish connections with actors and ask questions in the moment. I conducted 30 field interviews over the first three months of the project. These interviews allowed participants to speak freely about practices, ideas, and experiences. These interviews often took place at the site, but also occasionally away from the college. In

many ways, participants were happy to meet for lunch or coffee away from the college. These interviews also helped me develop a strong rapport and to become privy to practices that I could follow and observe.

Semi-structured and ITTD interviews. While I had initially set out to engage in semi-structured and Interview to the double (ITTD) interviews separately, the project evolved in ways that made this increasingly difficult. Semi-structured interviews illustrate how individuals within organizational practices make sense of a scene in retrospect. Rather than using fully open-ended format, a semi-structured interview follows a guide that attends to specific themes, concepts, and ideas but allows room for an organic encounter that emerges in the interview (Tracy, 2020). The guide is primarily intended to prompt and generate discussion instead of constraining how the conversation evolves. On the other hand, ITTD functions as a projective interview that asks the individual to imagine they are speaking to their double. The researcher functions as the double to help prevent unmasking of the double (Gherardi, 2019). The individual then explains to their double how they would engage in each practice or activity. The goal of this projective technique is to understand how an individual *might* perceive, experience, and perform an ordinary practice.

For the first two interviews, I followed a traditional ITTD interview technique. Because this technique can be difficult to get started, I tried to make participants feel comfortable by providing them with an example from my own experience (Gherardi, 2020). I attempted to switch roles with interviewee to build rapport. Although I gained a decent amount of information, I found the practice conceptually ambiguous and difficult to enact. For one, asking participants to detail their entire day proved difficult and

required constant probing that disrupted the flow of the interview. Interviewees frequently diverged from the exercise to explain certain experiences or reactions especially as they pertained to DEI. Furthermore, veterinarians not only embody a range of roles (instructor, clinician, administrator, counselor etc.), but their tasks change from day to day.

I initially planned on conducting semi-structured interviews after a few months of observation because I wanted to orient myself with the various organizational practices, examine their precarious formation and durability, and understand the heterogenous elements that constitute practices. However, because of my struggles with the ITTD, I decided to combine ITTD with a semi-structured interview. Specifically, I realized the importance of the occupation along with the organization. As such, I developed a hybrid interview protocol that attended to the CVM's history, ordinary practices, the veterinary identity, and experiences with DEI. At the same time, I situated the ITTD prompt based on specific practices that emerged in the semi-structured half of the interview. Simply put, I asked interviewees to focus on specific ordinary or DEI practices rather than detailing the events over the course of an entire day. For example, for one participant who engaged in community outreach, I prompted the participant to talk about their practices in preparing for and engaging in community outreach. In both portions of the interview, I asked participants probing questions to further explain who or what they connected within a practice (human and non-human).

Because I had established relations from ethnographic interviews, I was able to recruit many participants to conduct formally recorded interviews. Beyond the ethnographic interviews, I recruited participants through snowball sampling until

saturation was reached (Tracy, 2020). Each of the interviews were conducted virtually to not only protect participants' identities but also to reduce the threat posed by COVID-19. Participants included faculty, administrators, staff, students, and residents ranging from 21 to 75 years of age. To protect the anonymity of participants, I chose not to collect demographic information beyond age about participants. Specifically, I wanted to protect racial and ethnically diverse participants because there are so few within the CVM. I conducted fifteen interviews that lasted between 44 minutes and 122 minutes, averaging 1hr 15min. Interviews resulted in 905 single-spaced pages of data. I utilized a transcription service to transcribe the data. After the transcriptions were processed, I made sure that interviews were accurate with the recordings.

Texts and Documents. In this project, I collected a variety of documents that constituted and emerged within the organizational practices of the vet school. While I was given initial access to archival documents, time constraints prevented me from conducting thorough analysis at this stage in my ongoing investigation of diversity in veterinary medicine. Instead, I primarily collected CVM promotional documents, website information, email exchanges, presentation slides, VSO materials, anonymous survey responses, and open-ended feedback. Alongside CVM documents, I collected documents from the professional association for veterinarians, veterinary students, board certification, and academic journals within the field of veterinary medicine. Finally, I took several photos of CVM spaces and videos of events with permission from the college.

Data Analysis

As with most qualitative research, data analysis is an act of agential cutting (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). In fact, subscribing to a specific style or analytic technique can be constraining and at times frustrating. First, I describe how I thematically analyzed my data based on Tracy's (2020) phronetic iterative approach. Second, I illustrate how I conducted a visual network analysis of the three events at the CVM.

Iterative Analysis

First, Tracy's (2020) phronetic iterative approach offers a simplified and accessible way of engaging with data. An iterative approach is both etic and emic. *Etic* refers to drawing on existing theories, models, or explanations to understand the data whereas *emic* refers to the emergent readings of the data. An iterative approach involves a back and forth of constant comparison between the emerging data and the theories utilized. Within this process, there is constant reflexivity using motivating questions that help the researcher understand our role in shaping and reshaping the data.

I first engaged in constant memo writing to help guide questions and lines of thought. A primary goal was to stay close to data and remain attuned to theory. I engaged in continuous analysis throughout the project. After three months, I began synthesizing and initially coding the data. At this point, I had only done observations and ethnographic interviews; yet I was able to generate ideas and themes.

To code my data, I used MAXQDA a qualitative analysis software. MAXQDA allows users to intuitively code fieldnotes, transcripts, photos, or documents for a qualitative project. I first engaged in primary cycle coding where I read and re-read the data. Rather than doing line by line coding, my first level codes involved the highlighting

of lines, sections, and paragraphs. These codes were descriptive, active, and close to the data. After highlighting, I accounted for practice, action, and affect that emerged from the data. Second-level codes were labels such as "non-human animal connection," "disrupting whiteness," "disordered knowledgeability," "sensing bodily encounter," or "intensified calling." As such, most of my subheadings ranged from direct data to theoretical interpretation.

During this time, I frequently went back to theory and memos from observation and interviews. In attending to theory of practice, affect, and communication, I realized that observations and interviews forced me to consider the significance of occupational identity to the CVM. Not only did I shift interviews to attend to veterinary identity, the data moved in ways that changed how I was thinking about the analysis. Ultimately, I went back to the theory on practice and affect and brought in the notion of occupational identity. This disrupted my data and compelled me to think differently about the theory and the "data." This process shifted my analytical questions to "how does the veterinary profession produce social order within the CVM?" Finally, I coded transcripts, fieldnotes, and documents together to compare codes and categories. To give readers a sense of the codes that emerged, I developed 223 separate codes and highlighted 1107 sections across categories.

Visual Network Analysis

Beyond iterative analysis, I also conducted a visual network analysis (VNA) to illustrate the relational texture of a specific scene, event, or practice. Within this relational texture, I focused on the connections formed and the overall structure that emerged from those connections. In this way, form allowed for understanding the *effects*

produced from a particular practice or network. To analyze the actors and relations within a practice, the data from the observation protocol was compiled into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The data were separated into two sheets: *nodes* and *edges*. Nodes represent the actors within a given network, while edges signify the intra-action between nodes. In the nodes sheet, actors were coded with an ID (connects Excel Nodes sheet with Excel Edges sheet) and a label (name of the value on a Nodes sheet). For example, ID 5 corresponds with the label "Clicker." In the edges sheet, the connections are formatted as *source* and *target* where both represent specific nodes within the network. In this case, the node labeled "student of color" (source) connects with the node labeled "power point slide" (target). Once the excel sheets were configured, I imported the Excel nodes sheet and the Excel edges sheet into a network analysis program. I imported a total of 159 nodes and 337 edges into the network analysis program Gephi.

Gephi is an open-source software focused on graph and network analysis. More specifically, Gephi is concerned with visualization rather than exclusively with a "mathematical framework on which all parameters and layout options should be modeled" (Decupere & Simons, 2014, p. 94). In other words, Gephi offers users a "flexible network structure" (p. 94) that allows for description, interpretation, and spatial organizing based on the user's criteria and parameters. Thus, Gephi works to present a relational texture through a visual network. Nevertheless, once the data was imported into Gephi, I created what Decuypere (2020) calls *spatialization of the topology of the network*. Here, spatialization demonstrates how a network is shaped by its relations. For example, what shape does the network form and how tightly linked are connections between actors.

In keeping with Decuypere (2020; 2014), I utilized ForceAtlas 2, a unique force guided algorithm. Here, the algorithm shows how nodes are forced (attracted) towards each other, or forced (repulsed, pushed) apart from each other. With ForceAtlas 2, *relations* gain more importance over *individual* actors within a network. Furthermore, ForceAtlas 2 helped visualize how actors within a practice gain authority. The algorithm determined the force between nodes and edges based on their connections. In my analysis, actors' (nodes) size was commensurate to the number of intra-actions and relations. Simply put, the largest nodes had the greatest number of connections with other nodes. Because there are limited examples within the qualitative literature that illustrate how to analyze and interpret the visualization of a network (Venturini et al., 2017), I followed Decuypere's (2020) work to further analyze the data-based centers, density, and color gradient.

First, *centers* represented actors with a greater number of relations within the network. According to Bellotti (2015) the center carries a star-like impression because a center is connected to many nodes. Typically, centers held an authoritative position within the practices I observed. Second, the notion of *density* contained two functions. First, density referred to the texture and connectedness of the network. The density of a network speaks to the abundance of actors. Both DEI meetings analyzed contained high density because of the high number of actors that materialized. Second, density illustrated the strength of a connection (edge) between nodes. Gephi allows for edges to be directed or undirected. Directed edges represent a focused relation between two nodes, whereas undirected edges demonstrate a more fluid connection. I used this tool to describe the intensity of a relation between actors. In this way, I tried to account for how intense a

connection was and how actors were affectively attuned to actors within scene or practice. For example, lines (edges) with more density were more intense, whereas edges that were dotted or faint represented a lower density and less attunement.

Finally, *color gradient* explained the role of actors within the practice. First, I used color to illustrate actors' temporal presence within both DEI meetings. Next, color signified which actors materialized as potential trajectories (i.e. possibilities). Lastly, color explained how actors within the meeting materialized, but were neither potential trajectories nor captured the attention of other actors. For example, in DEI committee meeting #1, "Ad1" and "award feedback" were given a blue color because of their temporal presence in the meeting, whereas "CDO" was designated purple because it was brought up in the meeting as a relation but was not a potential trajectory.

After analyzing the network for its topological form, I provided a narrative interpretation. As previously mentioned, VNA focuses on the form of a practice or event and how that form produces certain effects. The use of narrative interpretation helped me tell a story of a particular reality (Mol, 2002) as it pertained to IDEA practices. As such, I used both fieldnotes and interview data to provide an in-depth interpretation.

To summarize, I have explained how my methodological assumptions, grounded in ethnography, affective ethnography, and praxiography have shaped my data collection and analysis. Next, I provided an in-depth description of the data collection methods used at a College of Veterinary Medicine to cultivate a story of practice. Finally, I used an iterative approach and VNA to analyze my findings. From a relational perspective, I recognize that the following account is not a complete picture, but one that is partial, precarious, and contested.

Chapter 4: Findings

Today is the first day of orientation at the vet school. I walked in, I was late, which of course, I'm late. I'm always late. I make my way through two glass doors into a tiled foyer. There were several students standing around with masks. They have familiar looks, from what I can tell, of nervousness and excitement. They each wore a lanyard style nametag. I'm thinking to myself "they look like summer campers!" I continued walking into a giant conference room with long white tables and vaulted ceilings. There are large windows that line two of the walls. There are about 30-40 people sitting down listening to my friend, who is discussing the details of orientation. Several people smile at me. Immediately, I remember that I didn't have a shirt. Everyone is wearing name tags and gray matching shirts, that have blue lettering on them and say VSO on the front and the Veterinary School Orientation on the back. Many of the people sitting down have binders and backpacks needed for each of the teams. I ducked down and made my way to the back of the room. Trying to be as invisible as possible. This feels different than the orientations I've attended. I am clearly an outsider here. There's an intensity that I have not felt in quite some time. I'm rarely overwhelmed. This was overwhelming. What have I gotten myself into?

When I reflect on that first experience at orientation, I realize that at the time, I did not quite understand what I was observing. I approached this project thinking about the vet school solely as an organization with DEI issues. Alongside that thinking, I knew the veterinary profession was grappling with diversity and inclusion. However, throughout my observations, document analysis, and interviews, I found it difficult to disentangle the organization from the *occupation*. According to Kuhn et al (2017), occupations are lines of work characterized by distinctive standards and practices. Like

organizations, occupations embody identities that position work as “who we are” is “what we do” (Ashcraft, 2013). The identity of the vet school remains deeply entangled with the identity of the veterinary profession. In fact, many of the organizational practices of the vet school are guided by the occupational identity of the veterinary profession to a) establish legitimacy and b) distinguish veterinary medicine from other professions. Occupational identity practices, activities and tasks are formed through a confluence of sociomaterial elements like objects, bodies, rules, and symbols.

In total my observations, participant interviews, and document analyses revealed four themes. The first theme explored in this chapter is concerned with the affective economy of both the CVM context and the occupation of veterinary medicine. The remainder of the chapter centers on the context of the CVM. Theme two addresses how the CVM produced and reproduced an atmosphere of whiteness. In theme three, I conduct a visual network analysis to illustrate how IDEA practices at the CVM are structured through attunement. The final theme explores how practices as the CVM are rendered neutral.

The affective economy of occupational identity in veterinary medicine

The occupational identity of veterinary medicine is configured through what Ahmed (2014) calls an *affective economy*. Here, the connections between signs, bodies, symbols, and practices form an economy that gains value through their circulation. Affect—bodily excitation, intensity, and sensation—is what makes these elements configured together (Aschraft, 2020). Affect configures connections and practices in the vet school and the profession in intense ways. Take VSO, an intensive three-day orientation, which usually takes place away from the College of Veterinary Medicine

(CVM). VSO entails welcoming first year vet students into the profession, while faculty, staff, and second year vet students serve as facilitators. Additionally, VSO features team building exercises and traditions that almost *any* veterinarian currently in practice could relate to regardless of where they went to vet school. To understand how the CVM addresses DEI practices, it is necessary to understand the affective economy of veterinary medicine as an occupation. Three occupational practices emerged in the data: a) non-human animal and human animal dis/connection, b) self- sacrificing practices, and c) exclusive selection practices. In the first sub-theme, I examine how veterinarians focus on the connection between humans and non-human animals. Second, I describe how veterinarians are expected to self-sacrifice. Finally, I outline how practices of exclusive selection determine who enters the profession.

The human animal and non-human animal dis/connection

The occupational identity of veterinary medicine is predicated on a connection between human animals and non-human animals. For veterinarians, the broader society is exceedingly anthropocentric in their perceptions of non-human animals. Anthropocentrism is the belief that human animals are the center of existence, and all other species are inferior (Clarke & Knights, 2018). In contrast, veterinary medicine attempts an ontological reorientation that places human animals and non-human animals on equal footing, at least in terms of care. In this subsection, I examine the tensions that surface from these practices and their effects on inclusion. First, I examine how veterinarians seek to strengthen the human animal/non-human animal bond. Second, I explore how occupational practices reinforce a separation between human animals and non-human animals.

Human animal/non-human animal bond. Embedded in this desire for non-human and human animal connection is what veterinarians refer to as the non-human animal-human animal bond. The profession understands this connection as a mutual relationship focused on the health and well-being of both human animals and non-human animals. For veterinarians, this is a psychological, physical, and emotional bond that has persisted for centuries. As such, the role of veterinarians is to mediate and "maximize the potentials of this relationship" (AVMA, 2022). While veterinarians have many roles, the human animal/non-human animal bond is a core occupational value. Several veterinarians found this role as a key component for why veterinarians do what they do. One participant offered this example:

> The veterinarian is the person who gets [the human animal/non-human animal bond] without explanation. The person you feel comfortable talking to about the random idiosyncrasies of your cat. How their cat comes when they call or how their dog seems to KNOW when they have had an awful day and just sit next to them and whine. How for some older people, knowing that they are needed to take care of their pet is the only thing that gets them out of bed and feeling motivated. The veterinarian is the bridge between the community of pet owners and the air of professional acceptance for their doting affection/love of their pets.

In this statement, the participant explains how veterinarians normalize human animal/non-human animal owners love for their pets. This normalization acknowledges and pushes back against the anthropocentric assumptions of the broader society of human animals and the failure of that society to comprehend the relationship between humans and their companion animals. Veterinarians, more than anyone, relate to animal

caregivers because the relationship is central to their occupational identity. This framing advances two claims for veterinary identity. First, veterinarians work practices entail more than focusing on the bodily health of non-human animals. The above example illustrates how veterinarians function as educators and emotional support systems for their clients. Second, the non-human animal/human animal bond establishes a jurisdiction claim that differentiates the veterinary occupation from other professions such as human medicine, animal science or wildlife biology.

Next, the human animal/non-human animal bond relies on the small animal/companion animal template. A small animal/companion animal veterinarian commonly treats cats and dogs, but also works with rabbits, rodents, and caged birds. Although veterinarians work in an array of foci, the small animal/companion animal image is a powerful affective motivator that dominates the occupational branding. As one participant states:

> I only pictured small animal veterinarians as a child. I think recruitment often centers around pets and the small animal general practice doctor who provides medical care for them. This not only fits into my childhood stereotypes, but it is females instead of males.

This participant suggests that small animal veterinarians are the dominant image of veterinary practice for the public. Interestingly, this image also affects who is interested in, recruited for, and frequently admitted into the profession. Another participant furthered this claim when talking about the selection process: “The truth of the matter is not everyone is gonna be a small animal veterinarian, but that is really the, um, really kind of the template that we use.” Ahmed (2014) argues that the stickiness of signs,

symbols, and practices are contingent upon their temporal repetition. The small animal/companion animal image of veterinary medicine carries affective value because of its constant circulation in branding and recruitment and its association with the human animal/non-human animal bond. In fact, 75% of veterinarians in private clinical practice work with small animal/companion animals (Burns, 2019). Here, the small animal/companion animal image not only motivates recruitment but materializes into the primary area of practice for veterinarians.

While the small animal/companion animal identity is the predominant area of work, many veterinarians challenge this identity because of its limited focus. As one veterinarian noted, “Veterinarians have many career paths and aren't just small animal practitioners…[this] fails to reach individuals who may be interested in different paths - research, shelter med, food animal med, regulatory medicine, politics.” Here, the participant outlines the diversity of trajectories within the profession, but also suggests the small animal identity is limiting in its affective connection. I experienced this tension throughout my observation, especially with regards to increasing diversity within the profession. Specifically, the small animal identity and the human animal/non-human animal bond may fail to affectively motivate POC from considering or even entering the profession. This barrier stems from the racialized history of black American’s experiences with non-human animals. According to James (2021) non-human animals have historically been used to racialize, dehumanize, and victimize POC’s through physical violence or through mediated representations. According to one participant, “If you want to recruit more black students, you have to address the why, why aren't there more black students as, as historically black people were not indoctrinated around

animals." Similarly, a participant of color described his family's reaction upon telling them he wanted to be a vet:

> They're like, huh? You mean like with dogs and cat doctors?" Yeah, but it, like, that's not what I wanna do. I wanna do other stuff. And there's all these other things available… I wanna bring it to other marginalized groups, make them aware that, "Hey, you can be involved in this as a medical goal and you don't have to be a dog or cat, veterinarian, and you don't have to be a cow or horse veterinarian. You just have to go through this process in vet school."

In this statement, the family assumes that veterinarians only work with cats and dogs. The participant was forced to explain that they became a veterinarian to do work outside of the "day to day, thermometer and butts" practices. Most importantly, the participant suggests that the other aspects such as medicine, toxicology, government, might be more of an affective device for marginalized groups to enter the profession than the human animal/non-human animal bond.

Finally, the human animal/non-human animal bond excludes bodies who lack access and exposure to non-human animals to form this affective connection. One participant described a meeting he had with a seven-year-old black child and their mother at CVM:

> And I said, when was the last time your daughter had seen any kind of animal? And she said, 'Other than a stray?' and I said, 'Mmhm', she said, 'Not around here.' I said, 'It's hard for you to reconcile this, isn't it?' She said, 'Yeah, this child is always "I love animals, mommy. I love animals." I said, 'You don't even own a domestic animal. When's the last time she saw an animal to generate that

> affinity, that fixation?' And she said, "Every time we see a stray one, she's like, "Oh, mommy, look at that cat." She's like, 'Girl, you better get away from that cat.' Inner city, single black mother who is completely disconnected from any importance or relevance of this profession. So, it wasn't just the child that I had to create validation, but also the mother.

In this experience, the child's relationship to non- human animals demonstrates the class and racial privilege within the human animal/non-human animal bond practices. Here, non-human animals appear to generate an affective "fixation" for the child despite their lack of access to traditional non-human animal relationships. For the mother and the child, bodily encounter with non-human animals was limited only to the sensation of "seeing" stray cats.

While the child's affinity for non-human animals intensified through these distant encounters, the mother does not experience this affective connection towards non-human animals or for practitioners, in this case veterinarians, concerned with non-human animal welfare. Instead, this participant needed to deconstruct the mother's image of veterinary practice to demonstrate the value of veterinarians *beyond* cats and dogs. The participant described how he went on to explain to the mother and her child how veterinarians often work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the National Institute of Health (NIH). He explained that veterinary practice extended well beyond companion animal care. For this mother, a veterinarian was only associated with taking care of animals, but the participant challenged the work practices of a veterinarian by creating novel connections with other trajectories and gave legitimacy to the child's interest outside the privileged space of encountering a companion animal. While non-human

animals are a core focus of the veterinary identity, there is much less focus on human animal practices. Participants presented human animal interests as disconnected from, and even in conflict with, those of non-human animals.

Disconnection to human animals. For the CVM, the central focus on non-human animals leads to a disconnect with human animals. Consideration of and training around human animals is secondary to non-human animal training. In contrast with their non-human animal patients, human animals are perceived as fixed, rational beings capable of learning and adapting to contexts. A recurring theme in my observations and interviews was the claim that veterinarians pursued their profession because they felt stronger connections with non-human animals. As one participant mentioned, "I know a lot of people get into vet med because they don't like people. They like animals." It was common to hear veterinarians speak about preferring animals over people or suggest that human animals were more difficult and emotionally frustrating. This dichotomy is even more apparent in the curriculum for veterinarians. At the CVM, the intensive curriculum almost exclusively centers on non-human animals and their welfare. According to one CVM student, veterinarians can and should be trained to work with both human animals and non-human animals:

> Being a people's person as well as being an animal person. That's something, I'm probably gonna need to work on too. Cause you know, being a people's person is hard. It's, it's really hard, you know? I don't think that we get enough training in vet school to be a people's person. Because we're always sitting down with our laptop or we're learning in a lab and then we get thrown into clinics and I'm like, we didn't take a class on communication. Like we get this one little simulation

> with the med school. And then we do it again before clinics. And I'm like I don't know how to talk to this person.

This student acknowledges that working with human animals (e.g. clients, medical suppliers, students, and fellow veterinarians) is also central to veterinary medicine and notes the difficulties presented by these relationships. There is recognition that communication with clients is essential to the profession. Yet, for veterinarians in training, curriculum focused on communicating with human animals is extremely limited. While this student remained aware of these gaps in learning, students also prioritized their non-human animal training. For example, I was asked to do a presentation about diversity for the Business and Management class at the CVM. There was an expectation that the bulk of students would attend class, however, only a third of the students attended the presentation because there was an exam the same day. It made sense that an exam focused on care for non-human animals would take priority over a presentation (that was also recorded), but it also spoke to the understanding that viewed the human relationships I discussed as tertiary.

This separation between human animals and non-human animals creates an affective association that DEI is decidedly human, and that veterinary medicine is non-human. By adhering to this strict ontology of separation, veterinarians fail to appreciate the entanglement of humans and non-humans in their occupational practices. Thus, an ontology of separation positions DEI questions and practices as tertiary to veterinary medicine. The assumed conflict between human animal interests and non-human animals further manifested in an entrenched ideology that values self-sacrifice.

Self-Sacrifice

Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge. I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics. I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence. -Veterinarian's Oath

A salient aspect of veterinary identity is the willingness to sacrifice oneself for clients, patients, and the profession. As a sociomaterial practice, self-sacrifice intensely motivates veterinarians to not only pursue the profession but demonstrate their devotion to animal welfare. Through affect, self-sacrifice sticks to ordinary bodies and objects, across space and time. Self-sacrificing practices affect the movement and trajectories of bodies that circulate throughout the profession. By branding sacrifice as a "natural" part of work, veterinary identity distinguishes itself from other professions. I found that veterinarians engage in corporeal and temporal sacrifices. For the sake of clarity, I have separated them into two sub-sub themes. However, I recognize this is only one way of codifying them.

Corporeal sacrifices. First, corporeal practices demonstrate how veterinarians routinely sacrifice their bodies for the sake of the profession. Specifically, corporeal sacrifice overtly manifests in their engagement with animals in distress. In fact, during my observation, I frequently witnessed students, faculty, and technicians in stressful

situations that could result in bodily harm such as a cow pinning them in a stall or giving a vaccine to a dog that aggressively bites.

Second, there is an ongoing tension about what the body should and should not do. For instance, during the annual white coat ceremony, a ceremonial practice that celebrates third year students' transition from didactics to clinical training, the speaker talked about the resilience of third year students saying, "I do know that it's taken grit, sacrifice, determination, faith, flexibility, and friendship, and caffeine, lots and lots of caffeine for you to have earned the white coat that you're about to receive." A key premise is that sacrificing of sleep and consuming "lots and lots of caffeine" are necessary practices to survive vet school and become a good veterinarian. Here, caffeine works as a sociomaterial practice that energizes and excites the body to move, work long hours, and engage in more self-sacrificing practices. One participant echoed this observation:

> I mean, even just like, this is, this is kind of a side thing, but I mean, one of the things that I, I encounter a whole lot is people overly caffeinated, like tons and tons and tons of energy, drinks, coffee, whatever. Well, when you're treating anxiety disorders, one of the things that you're focusing on is actually reducing physiological arousal. Come to find out massive amounts of caffeine can trigger panic attacks. I mean, even just like the, the jokes and stuff, you know, about people, I mean, they're jokes, whatever, that student will make about like caffeine and stuff. And like the long hours, like people will almost brag about sleep deprivation as if it's a badge of honor.

As seen here, caffeine matters for survival so that veterinarians can practice and learn effectively. In addition, caffeine also emerges as a symbol of sacrifices to the body. Specifically, there is an acceptance that sleep deprivation is not only okay but welcomed because it illustrates one's commitment to the profession and, by extension, to non-human animals.

While caffeine stimulates bodily excitation, self-sacrifices that disregard bodily necessities such as food and water are common in veterinary spaces. I observed how the consumption of food was a precarious occupational and organizational practice. There were very few spaces designated to eat lunch away from others. In general, the practice of eating breakfast or lunch was frequently contested by weighing options between the veterinarian's body and the body of a non-human animal. This participant clearly described how such practices were problematic:

> I'm just like, would, nobody who knows a vet student would say that they're thriving. Like, I feel like I'm maybe thriving like this week when I'm away from the CVM and like enjoying a specialty that I really like. I've gotten lucky. I know some people find that, but when you're at the CVM and you're on your required rotations, you're definitely surviving. You're like literally day by day, maybe even hour by hour trying to make it through the day. So, like you better have a snack in your pocket because you don't know when you're gonna get lunch. There's no like actual lunch. And they know a lot of the rotations don't take that into consideration of like, we are gonna actually schedule this at 12 noon as a lunch break. And then it's just a lot of like patient care comes down to the student. So even if you get that hour lunch break, well, lo and behold, that's the time you're

> supposed to go give your animal some medicine. But like that's when you need to go flush the catheter of an animal. So, it's, it's definitely survival.

I noticed that there were some rotations with a built-in lunch break, however, students, faculty, and staff, still had to make decisions about what was important and, in some cases, declined to take the lunch break. Furthermore, the participant demonstrates how survival requires one to proactively keep a snack on hand because they are unsure when they will have the chance to eat. The practice of scheduling cases and managing cases takes for granted how, when, and where one can consume food. More importantly, students are expected to make decisions about whether to eat or give non-human animals their necessary medicine at the appropriate time. Thus, ordinary practices such as eating, drinking water, and using the restroom were deemphasized for the welfare of non- human animals and the learning experience. This decision is also contextual based on the rotation. Overt expectations of sacrifice are rarely articulated, but the affective resonance to self-sacrifice works to dictate how bodies move. The student further explained this tension:

> And then I feel like physical health goes downhill, quickly. Cause you're not eating well. You're not eating at appropriate times. You're not getting to use the restroom at appropriate times. Like you're not drinking water. You, there were like multiple days on equine where I didn't drink water. And I was like. Like I haven't had a drink all day. Like, what? You get home at the end of the night, and you're like, I can't do anything. Like I can't like look up my cases for tomorrow. And then that's also a requirement like, hey, you got three surgeries tomorrow. You better look 'em up. Like you got this dog coming in for chemo. You better

> know exactly what like these chemo drugs are supposed to be doing. You know, your day doesn't end. When you leave at like six o'clock, you then have to go home and then look up your cases for the next day. On some rotations you're back up at the school at 10:00 PM. Giving your treatments. There's nobody to give the treatments with the student on the case. Yeah. So that's survival. It's like, I mean, it really is like, when do you work? When do you keep up on your exercise? When do you take your dogs on a walk? Like, when do you work on your personal relationships at home?

Here, the student lists the various sacrifices that must be made to simply survive the training. In this case, one's physical health is impacted because the consideration to engage in practices such as "using the restroom" and "drinking water" are commonly neglected. Again, sacrifice surfaces in the thinking and doing for the profession and non-human animals. Interestingly, I found that sacrifice also affected veterinarians' ability to take care of their own companion animals. These practices privilege able-bodies capable of making bodily sacrifices for the profession.

Next, corporeal sacrifices affected the mental health and well-being of veterinarians. Discussions about mental health and wellbeing are salient throughout the profession. For example, one participant noted how they received "another long email about how terrible everything is and that we don't care about their mental wellbeing." Returning to the earlier quote from a participant about how caffeine affects anxiety disorders and "triggers panic attacks," there remains an expectation that mental health will suffer during vet school and beyond. In fact, the vet school employs a psychologist who specifically treats vet students and focuses on mental health and wellbeing. Despite

these efforts, several participants mentioned how wellbeing remained a constant issue. One participant stated:

> I just, I feel like it's a very nice concept, but they're not really following through with that thinking. Because, you know, how there's like this common perception of like, how there's a lot of like suicide and like mental health and a lack of well-being within the community? People are always talking about not one more veterinarian or whatever, but they're not really doing anything about it.

This student explains how signs such as “suicide,” “well-being,” and “mental health” are common perceptions that then circulate in an organizational culture that is unsupportive. In fact, one of the participants was unaware that a psychologist existed at the CVM until recently. Even if students were aware of the psychologist, taking time off to see the psychologist was often difficult. As one participant noted, “When you have rotations that are notoriously busy, or with professors that like, right or wrong, it could totally be perception, but the perception is like “don’t ask to get off when you’re on this rotation.” In other cases, some coworkers would make comments that perpetuated mental health stigma. For this reason, sacrifice materialized in the affective tension between addressing one’s mental health and their professional devotion.

Furthermore, the common perception around suicide speaks to the sociomaterial sacrifice of one’s living body. There were several discussions about suicide during my observations. It was so common that I began to discuss it myself to outsiders as a way of highlighting the affective intensity of the profession. However, one participant challenged the accumulation of suicide as an affective commodity in the profession stating, “The suicide piece. They’ll say like, we have the highest suicide rate. No, we don’t, we’re not

even top 15, but we have all of these things that we hear over and over." Suicide materializes as a symbol of occupational sacrifice and as a reason for addressing mental health practices. As a sociomaterial symbol of sacrifice, elevating the degree of suicide: a) reinforces that a veterinarian must suffer and b) intensifies the veterinary occupational identity. Moreover, the affective commodification of suicide reinforces bodily privilege through an assumed able-bodied norm. This commodification positions survival as an indication of mental toughness in the face of adversity. In short, corporeal sacrifice privileges those who are *able* to cope with the bodily demands of the profession and marginalizes those who are not.

Temporal sacrifices. Alongside the body, veterinarians are routinely expected to sacrifice their time for the profession. Veterinary identity views time sacrifices in two ways. First, time sacrifices signify hard work and long hours. Second, the longer you work implies a higher level of caring about non-human animals. Said differently, time includes the management of time and the degree of work ethic and service put into the profession. For veterinarians, time sacrifices carry immense affective value because of their association with non-human animal care and devotion to the profession. As one participant noted, hard work and long hours are configured under the guise of "excellence" and "self-improvement."

> Veterinary medicine is a profession. It's not a job. And because of that, we have an expectation that you will put in more work than the typical eight-hour employee, um, and that it involves continuous self-improvement. Um, so there is an expectation of hard work and continuous improvement that sometimes perhaps, um, is overemphasized, mm, by the same in token, if you're striving for

> excellence in any profession, you can't do it between nine to five for all practical purposes, or I should say there are very few people that can.

The assumption that "excellence" cannot be achieved within an eight-hour workday carries two implications. First, it demonstrates how the occupational identity of veterinarians is affectively motivated. Working from eight to four is associated with "a job" while a "profession" is linked with working well beyond those constraints. Second, separating "job" from 'profession" emboldens the classism and exclusivity of the veterinary profession.

Next, time sacrifices are expected prior to and during vet school. Students are expected to manage their time despite devoting an unhealthy amount of time to the profession. For example, one participant explained students' commitment expectation:

> I mean, we, we say we want work life balance, and then they, they're in class from eight o'clock to four o'clock and we expect 'em to study two hours a day outta class for every one hour they're in class. That's like a metric that, people talk about, you should spend double the time outta class that you spend in class. I heard that when I was an undergrad, and I mean, you can't do that in vet school because you spend too much time in class. So, again, we talk about work life balance. We talk about, um, uh, you know, staying on time with everything. So, you don't have to catch up because it's virtually impossible. Um, with that said, we select for people that don't do that.

In this statement, there is an awareness that work-life balance is disregarded because the students they choose to admit struggle with work-life balance. This distinction assumes that veterinary profession chooses "whole" individuals who are not affected by

occupational practices. Moreover, the fact that "it is virtually impossible" to catch up after falling behind places pressure on students to sacrifice their time to stay on track. Although I observed times where students were encouraged to do things outside of studying and service to the profession, the occupational practices made it difficult to enact based on the affective compulsion to study. Attempts to address concerns about time often result in mixed messages:

> The students often will share things, you know, they're resentful at, um, the vet school's attempts at wellbeing. It'll be like, 'you should exercise, you should eat healthy, but you're expected to be at school from like 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Um, and then it's like, they'll say we're supposed to be well and be healthy, but we don't have time to do that. And then they'll say here's an ice cream social.

Notice that, from the participant's perspective, the vet school does not have time to adequately address well-being but does have time to provide ice cream socials for the college. Here, the onus is squarely placed on individual students to navigate the expectation of long hours and hard work, while also making time for their well-being. Yet, the affective value of time pulls students towards sacrificing their well-being for non-human animals and the profession.

Finally, temporal sacrificing practices are intensely charged despite their ordinary constitution. This can be seen in a situation where a student seeks an accommodation related to time. Specifically, the ordinary practices of work and time are challenged by the accommodation:

> For a student who is in a wheelchair very easy to say, we should have tables that come down that they could reach. If you have someone that has, uh, um,

> hypoglycemic episodes, it's easy to say they should be able to run and get a snack when they need to get a snack. That's easy. But what we're getting more and more of are the disabilities where they're asking for accommodations that it's hard to see how you can do that and be a veterinarian. And we're in the midst of one right. That's an extreme accommodation in that they're, uh, demanding to have an eight hour a day schedule. In other words, like they come in at eight and they leave at four. Our cases, come in at seven, and they're here till they're done. And that's later at night and we do emergency shifts and we work on the weekend and you can't even see a case through from beginning to end if you're coming in at eight and leaving at four.

In this statement, there is an expectation that 8-4 is not work, but that long hours and seeing a case from beginning to end is not only work, but an essential sacrifice. For this reason, wheelchair access and hypoglycemia are positioned as easy accommodations, whereas requesting an 8-hour workday schedule surfaces as "extreme." Here, time is mattered as both integral to "who vets are" and "what they do." Objects, practices, and bodies are, then, pulled together into affective associations that appear coherent. Furthermore, we can see how the affective circulation of time/work ethic sacrifices configure practices and bodies to seemingly stick together. As such, emergency shifts, weekend work, case prep, owners, patients, discharging practices, and students are configured together to form a texture of practices that rely on a repetition of temporal sacrifices. This configuration positions sacrifice as an expected ordinary practice and the accommodation as both difficult and extraordinary.

Temporal sacrificing practices, then, privilege able bodies who are unencumbered by other obligations and can adhere to the profession and non-human animal work practices without question. This works to marginalize those who are parents or caregivers, those working through school, and or those who have health related issues. These temporal sacrifices maintain traditional gendered practices that assume an "ideal" male worker. This assumption was especially surprising given that the profession has shifted from predominantly white and male to predominantly white and female. Overall, bodily and temporal self-sacrifice retain intersectional privilege through social class, gender, race, age, ability, and other identity characteristics within ordinary veterinary practices and disadvantages those who struggle to meet these sacrificial expectations.

Exclusive Selection

Exclusive selection demonstrates the sociomaterial ways in which veterinarians are admitted to the profession. Through implicit and explicit practices, veterinarians are selected as "elite" members who fit the occupational identity. Exclusive selection serves to stake out jurisdiction among health professions and animal lovers. In other words, exclusive selection determines who can claim membership based on what a veterinarian is and is not. Ashcraft et al (2012) claim that exclusivity emerges across dimensions and practices that position the profession as elite and valuable. In veterinary medicine this exclusivity is felt and sensed through bodily encounter. For example, during the veterinary orientation, I found myself feeling intimidated, even as a fifth-year doctoral student on the brink of completing my degree because I am not a veterinarian, and I am not in STEM. There were times where I even devalued my knowledge as a social scientist. I distinctly remember how many speakers talked about the pride that comes

with getting into vet school. The entire orientation experience, which spans a full three days, is meant to energize students and demonstrate to them the value of making it this far in their veterinary journey.

Beyond observation, several participants demonstrated that exclusivity claims work to separate veterinarians from all other health professions and establish the profession as unique.

> Have you ever seen the shirts that say real doctors treat more than one species? No. Okay. So that's a thing that, it's a joke. They'll always compare like, oh, vet school's even harder than medical school or say, do you know how competitive it is to get into vet school? You know? Um, sometimes people will say that they went into vet med because they knew it was more competitive.

This participant explains how veterinarians are distinct from those working in human animal medicine because their admissions process is absurdly competitive. Similarly, the branding that "real doctors treat more than one species" glorifies the separation from human medicine, albeit jokingly. To clarify, there are 155 accredited human animal medical schools while there are only 33 accredited veterinary medical schools in the United States. In context, an outsider may perceive such claims as less impressive simply because there are significantly more human medical schools than veterinary schools.

Aside from comparison to human animal medicine, the exclusivity claims are also intended to elevate entry into veterinary medicine as unique from other animal related professions such as animal science, zoology, or marine biology. As one participant noted, "there are a lot of caring people who love animals, that didn't make straight A's in biochemistry and physics, and they didn't get to be a veterinarian."

The exclusive selection of veterinarians is characterized by three forces or intensities of occupational identity each holding affective value. Those forces, outlined in the following subsections, are callings, anticipatory socialization, and an over achiever archetype.

Calling practices. An affective force for veterinarians is that many have always felt an intense connection to the profession. Calling practices demonstrate that certain bodies are drawn to the profession in some way. Callings are meaningful and connected to one's identity (Sánchez-Sánchez, 2021). According to American Veterinary Medical Association or AVMA (2016), about 60% of vet school applicants have wanted to be a veterinarian since they were very young. Even those students who may consider another career path describe feeling drawn to the profession. According to one participant:

> For the longest time I considered going into the police force, but the desire to know what happened behind the scenes once those animals were rescued eventually just led me to pursue vet med instead. I don't regret it at all, though. I think if I would have gone the other route, it wouldn't have fully satisfied that curiosity.

The affective force from this participant's connection to non-human animals leads them to think about joining law enforcement. However, veterinary medicine not only embodies the prestige of a doctor, but the profession maintains sociomaterial jurisdiction over non-human animal welfare. This connection was felt at various times during the CVM's orientation where students told me that their desire to be a veterinarian started at a very young age. One participant explained how this early attachment to the profession seemingly connects bodies together, but can separate them as well:

> I mean like, um, you know, police do this to some degree, human animal doctors do this to some degree, but it's a calling, you know, even at VSO. You might have some of the groups they'll go around. When did you first want to be a vet? If you're like "You know, I changed majors my senior year in high school and took some pre-reqs because I realized I hated business. You feel like, "Wow, I'm an outsider because I didn't, when I was four years old.

The practice of discussing when individuals wanted to be veterinarians associates all the bodies in these groups. Many of these students are meeting face-to-face for the first time at VSO. Although they have different backgrounds, families, histories, and values, the fact that they made it into veterinary school carries an intensity that is difficult to describe. While there are many veterinarians who decided to pursue the profession later in life, there is an affective excitability that comes from a calling and responding to that calling. More importantly, callings determine who is worthy enough to pursue the veterinary profession, and ultimately achieve the distinction of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

Next, callings are utilized as justification for why certain bodies choose to pursue the profession and others do not. The veterinary identity relies on calling as an affective motivator. At the same time, callings appear as rational and cognitive components to pursue the profession. I experienced a bodily encounter where I was asked why *I* did not want to be a veterinarian:

> Participant: Well, let me ask you, um, did you have pets when you were growing up? Did you ever think about being a veterinarian?
>
> Scott: Yeah. No to thinking about being a veterinarian.

Participant: So you own pets. Did you take your pets to a veterinarian?

Scott: Oh yeah. For sure.

Participant: But you never thought about being a veterinarian?

Scott : No

Participant: Why not?

Scott: I would say that it was largely like, like the, the experience, you know? Cause I, I can remember like the people that I, I can remember some of the veterinarians that we, that we took our animals to...I had no idea what that meant. Like it was such a mystery to me.

Participant: I bet if you asked our students more than 50% of 'em would say, they thought about being a veterinarian in middle school, by the time they were in junior high. Why didn't you?

Scott: Yeah, I didn't, I, I didn't know any, I didn't know anyone who was a veterinarian.

Participant: Why didn't you know anybody who was a veterinarian?

Scott: I mean, yeah. It's, it's a, I didn't (Laughs)

Participant: Who's interviewing who (Laughs).

Scott: Yeah, exactly. No, but I mean, it's true. Yeah. I had, no, my frame of reference for that was very, very, very small.

Participant: So that's the difficulty we face. We don't think about it because of how we're oriented. I mean, I'd rather, I, I would much rather talk to you about how blood is oxygenated than talk about diversity and inclusion, Honestly..

Scott: But,

Participant: And, but by the same token, um, I also know that when I talk to, um, minority kids about becoming a veterinarian, they don't even think about it.

Scott: Yeah.

Participant: And I can't tell you exactly why, but you didn't think about it.

Scott: Yeah. Yeah.

Participant: Did you ever think about becoming a physician?

Scott: Um, yes.

Participant: All right. Well, it's very similar in terms of what we do. Why didn't you think about being a veterinarian. going to improve diversity in our profession. It's got to start with junior high school kids

Here, a calling is not explicitly articulated but presents as an affective force that excites and connects bodies to the occupation. In this exchange, the participant is searching for a logical answer for why I did not "think" about becoming a veterinarian and why other black kids do not "think" about the profession. The participant assumes that callings are rational and cognitive processes. Upon not having an answer to this diversity question, the speaker defers back to the affective value of calling that elicited mostly "white" vet students to think about the profession

Further, the idea of formativeness provides an explanation for why the speaker associates a lack of diversity with feeling a connection to the profession. Formativeness relies on some degree of completion which allows bodies to affectively say "this is how it is done." That said, formativeness also relies on knowing how to do something so that it "feels" complete. Calling practices have been associated with the profession for a long time, and thus, become the default practice for increasing diversity. In other words, being

drawn to the profession early on is necessary to diversify the profession. At the same time, there is a frustration because the process for seeing this practice of veterinary calling in black culture seems elusive and far away. The practice of following one's calling is a privilege that that hinges on an array of factors. This is especially true for veterinarians of color. For example, one participant of color challenged the notion of a calling, saying:

> Like, I feel like a lot of people say like, oh, I wanted to be a veterinarian since I was four. And that's like something I've never been able to relate to because I never thought that being a veterinarian was like an actual choice for me.

This participant explains that the desire to be a vet at an early age was not an option because they never experienced the sensation of "seeing" someone who looked like them. Several participants talked about how they were drawn to the profession because they knew someone who was a veterinarian. For this student, callings were not individual constructions, but relied on media representations, families, friends, and even experiences with non-human animals. Most importantly, privilege manifests in the ability of one to not only follow their calling, but to fulfill their calling as well.

Experiential Socialization. Experiential socialization refers to the process by which applicants are expected to shadow, volunteer, or observe both animals and veterinarians in their work environment. This socialization takes place in veterinary K-12 outreach and Pre-Vet clubs. For instance, the CVM admissions brochure states:

> The extent of an applicant's experience reflects on their knowledge about the profession, depth of knowledge, motivation, trust, and reliability, attention to

> detail, ability to listen, ability to receive and apply constructive criticism, and their overall persistence.

This emphasis suggests that knowledge of what it is to be a vet is exclusive to vets. Here, knowledge is found in the doing, presence, and orientation to the occupation. Affective value is placed on the sensory experience of bodily encounter with the vets, vet techs, non-human animals, practices, and spaces. On the surface, engaging in experience offers considerable value. It allows an individual to get a sense of the profession and ultimately decide whether they want to pursue it. However, schools of veterinary medicine typically require observation hours as part of the admissions requitements. For instance, a participant suggested:

> Because they already knew how competitive that scores are. That's when they start their shadowing. So for us, you know, if you're a psychologist or MSW, whatever, you might volunteer at a crisis line, you know, when you're an undergrad, get a little experience. In vet med, there's people that will start shadowing veterinarians when they're 13, 14 years old. And I think we're revising from what I understand, we're revising things a little bit. So, we don't weigh those hours as heavily, you know, but there's people that apply to vet school who may have a thousand hours of shadowing experience. Guess what, you know, when you're, uh, maybe lower SES and you had to work a job in high school, um, you're not gonna have time, you might be able to do a, a Saturday morning every, you know, couple months or something, but you're not gonna have time to do hundreds of hours and stuff

This participant explains how the requirement has led to applicants beginning observation and exposure at increasingly early ages. This early experience allows them to accumulate more and more hours and strengthen their applications for vet school. In essence, shadowing, while meant to introduce an individual to the profession, circulates into an affective commodity. The participant describes that they are "revising things a little bit, so we don't weigh those hours as heavily." At the same time, the most competitive applicants have a high number of hours. This explanation is also advanced in the brochure, where the minimum is 40 hours, but "successful applicants have more than 300 hours." Many schools have recently edited requirements to account for equity, as the participant stated. Yet, the affective value of shadowing is connected to knowledge, resources, recommendations by a vet, labor, time, access are configured together to reproduce exclusion.

This exclusion repeats because of the assumed neutrality of shadowing. Unsurprisingly, this practice affects bodies differently. For instance, a participant of color demonstrates how their process of entry into the vet school was vastly different because they did not think about vet school until college.

> Like I didn't have any hours. I didn't like shadow people in high school. And like all that stuff that people usually do. Like, I didn't have major hours. I didn't start working to it until like, I, I got to college when I was like, okay, now I need to start working towards it. Like I know it's like an actual thing that I can do. Wow. I'm gonna start like trying to get hours trying to do research. I was like literally doing everything that I needed to do for my application in like three years.

Because of the requirements, this participant had to work and accumulate hours in a much shorter time in order to be a competitive applicant. As this example illustrates, shadowing practices disproportionately affect a range of bodies, particularly those who choose to be a veterinarian later in their educational journeys. Furthermore, shadowing materializes as unpaid labor that privileges those with financial security, transportation, familial support, and access to a veterinarian in close proximity who typically looks like them and is willing to work with them.

Overachiever Archetype. The overachiever type explains how selection practices are geared toward "overachievers" who are capable of doing a range of activities while simultaneously excelling in academics. For instance, the admissions brochure provides a snapshot of the previous cohorts' overachievement. An examination of most vet school admissions branding revealed numbers about applicants' GPAs versus accepted students' GPAs or a breakdown of the course-loads taken by successful applicants. Again, this desire for overachievers is not radically different from the requirements for admission into undergraduate institutions and other professional programs. Yet, this selection of overachievers relies on mutual inhabitation. Mutual inhabitation signifies work-body reciprocity (Kuhn et al., 2017). In other words, veterinarians are expected to "overachieve" long before they are accepted into vet school. If they are accepted, this overachievement materializes into an expectation of self-sacrifice. For veterinarians, "the selection" of overachievers is viewed as entangled with the occupation. One participant makes this observation when talking about the competitiveness of vets.

> Because of the nature selection for vet the veterinary profession and then the rigor of the curriculum when we get there, we're all sort of a little bit Type A overachiever types and sometimes it's hard to put that aside. So sometimes the students, even when they don't need to be competing anymore, they're still competitive.

As the participant detailed, selection and curriculum require bodies to be "type a" and over-achievers but also to "put that aside." Here, the over-achiever archetype is positioned as something that can be turned on and off when needed. This separation ignores how the occupation of veterinarians affects their need to be overly competitive. Another participant explains how this mutual inhabitation has surfaced over time:

> So I, I would say that, uh, the selection process for veterinary students probably kids that, um, and by that, that are, um, that has to do with their academic profession. And when I interviewed for vet school, um, the guy who interviewed me, asked me if I was a neurotic little overachiever and, um, and I said, um, I suppose probably I am. And he said, then you'll fit in. Mm. And, um, he was know, that, that, that man, Dr. Bill Evans was probably, he was right. I mean, we still are, are filled with neurotic little overachiever and, and that is our strength and our weakness.

This example exposes the stickiness of "neurotic little overachiever" that seems to inhabit the participant's body after being asked the question. Moreover, the notion of "fitting in" supposes this personality type is formed and determinate. However, exclusive selection suggests the body must work to overachieve in order to gain acceptance into the profession. As I have previously mentioned, the work of a veterinarian demands qualities

such as self-sacrifice that constitute overachievement. The participant further explains the exclusivity that privileges certain bodies over others:

> We expect people that are, um, academically gifted or work hard at it so that, um, they have the intellectual capacity and that they have the emotional capacity to deal with the disrupt clients who, um, who bring their animals into us. when we look at our, our, um, admissions process, traditionally, it's been based upon academic achievement and outside activities that include, you know, clubs and work and other things to see if they've become a relatively well-rounded person. But the truth of the matter is we would probably do a better job of selecting students if we had, um, instead of having a panel of faculty, if we had some psychologists interview, I mean, seriously, you know.

Through this description, the sociomaterial constitution of overachievement emerges. The assumption is that overachievers are resilient and can handle the complexity of the profession. In other words, they can handle anything that is thrown their way. The connection between selection and adaptability sticks because of affect. However, this connection endures because of the mutual inhabitation. The participant admits that the overachievers are not the best metric for choosing students. Most importantly, the association of overachiever and adaptability relies on an assumed neutrality that is produced through privilege such as one's ability to manage a higher course load, maintain a high GPA, gain professional experience, and engage in extracurriculars is contingent on a number of factors that are directly tied to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In short, the affective economy of the veterinary identity demonstrates how social order is produced through a felt connection with ordinary occupational practices of the

profession. First, veterinary identity privileges human animal non-human animal connection, with a particular emphasis on the small animal template, while marginalizing practices that center human animals. Second, self-sacrificing practices privilege the unencumbered ideal worker who has the privilege to sacrifice time and their body for the profession. Finally, veterinary identity relies on exclusive selection practices such as calling, shadowing, and overachievement to sustain affective adherence to the profession.

Atmosphere of whiteness

Alongside the affective economy of veterinary identity, interviews and observations revealed a consistent atmosphere of whiteness. An atmosphere refers to the sensory experience that surrounds bodies, objects, spaces, and practices (Marsh & Śliwa, 2022). Whiteness is understood as taken for granted set of norms that "shapes relations, processes, contexts and outcomes of work" (Al Ariss et al., 2014, p. 363). Whiteness is often entwined with ideologies such as rationality (Arcinega, 2021), nationality (Grimes, 2001), or individualism (Goldstein Hode & Meisenbach, 2017). An *atmosphere of whiteness* then denotes how power and privilege emanate from the affective circulation of whiteness. As an atmosphere, whiteness exceeds cognitive enactment and surfaces as a constellation of intensity and energy. At the CVM, the atmosphere of whiteness affectively (dis)ordered DEI practices through bodily encounter, spatiality, resilience, and the spectre of politics. Each of these practices are discussed below.

Whiteness as bodily encounter

Before beginning my research, I was acutely aware of whiteness in veterinary medicine. My exposure to veterinary medicine through personal experience and media representations fostered the perception that veterinary medicine was an overwhelmingly

white profession. This awareness was reinforced by my experiences investigating the CVM. In many situations, including large gatherings, I was the only black person in attendance. Participants of all races pointed to the whiteness of both the profession and the CVM. This attention to whiteness frequently, if not exclusively, referred to the prevalence of white bodies and the noticeable lack of racial or ethnic diversity. As one participant stated, “I also think about people who are like, they don’t walk in the classroom and like, see a bunch of other students that look like them.” Here, seeing students that look like you is framed as an uncommon affective experience for racially and ethnically diverse bodies.

Interestingly, whiteness was positioned as a sociomaterial privilege that benefits white people through the constant presence of and interaction with other white bodies. One participant explained how this constant interaction impacts diversity:

> I don't run into anybody different than me and it depends on what you mean by diversity because like, mostly what I'm about is racial diversity. You know, we certainly have gender diversity. We certainly have, have diversity in a lot of different ways. The one place we don't is race. And we don't even think about that because when you're amongst 96% of the people that look just like you, you don't think about diversity.

The statement suggests that whiteness relies on repeated bodily encounters between white people that simultaneously normalizes whiteness and masks the lack of racial or ethnic diversity. The prevalence of white bodies precludes one from encountering and, thus thinking about racial diversity. This participant suggests that encountering more racial diversity would change how people think about race. However, there are racial and ethnic

bodies in the CVM, yet, from the participant's perspective, the prevalence of white bodies creates an atmosphere that resonates as exclusively white.

Despite concerns that repeated bodily encounters masked the absence of non-white bodies, there appeared to be an awareness of the prevalence of white bodies among participants. This awareness of whiteness influenced inclusion efforts at the CVM. Specifically, there were efforts to mask whiteness by showcasing the racial diversity in photos and promotional materials. In fact, this practice was rarely articulated, but present in bodily encounters:

> You kind of feel like you're, you're just there to like have the image of having diversity instead of like actually going and like actively making that happen, you know? For example, like photos, if you have like an activity. I've seen this a lot and there's a lot of photos of me just like doing some activity and it's like a one-to-one situation. You have a person of color, a white person, a white person to just like show how diverse they are; when, in reality, it's like five of us and then a hundred of them.

This participant's experience illustrates how the CVM attempts to generate affective connection and combat whiteness by highlighting racial diversity. For this student, however, being included in photos feels strategic and serves to mask the whiteness of the CVM. Furthermore, the perception of whiteness as bodily encounter leads to a singular focus on bringing in racially diverse people. As one participant noted:

> I want us to do more, and I want us to do better, and I want us to, I want us to accomplish more. I want to get it to be so that if we have, when someone come in

> who's, uh, Hispanic or Latinx, she could look around and see there's several others like her.

The emphasis on bringing in more diverse bodies should not be understated. While the diversity of bodies in this space is essential to DEI efforts, exclusively centering bodily encounter ignores how bodies are entangled with practices. In the current formulation, not only are white bodies separated from practices of whiteness, but those who are racially diverse become disembodied and excluded.

Spatiality of whiteness

Here, spaces refer to the contested sociomaterial configurations felt, experienced, and inhabited by a myriad of actors. The whiteness of space refers to the taken for granted ways in which privilege accumulates through affect. First, whiteness spatially privileged practices that related to the profession. In this way, practices that foregrounded race or ethnicity were a rare occurrence.

I first experienced the absence of race play out at VSO. During the second day of VSO, each team engaged in a campus tour. Students were shown a variety of campus facilities including coffee shops, recreation centers, statues, and athletic stadiums. While the guided tour document included the African American Cultural Center, the guide for my tour group passed by but did not acknowledge the center. While many of the other tour stops were addressed and described in relation to their function for the incoming students, the spatial and functional connections to the cultural center were left out. While race was made present on the campus tour document, the practice of walking by and identifying the building was overlooked. The implication of this omission suggested that only black bodies, none of whom (other than myself) were represented in the tour group,

had use for the center or would benefit from knowledge of its existence or resources. More importantly, making the African American Cultural Center present on the tour would require an awareness of the building's spatial significance and discussions about the racial history of the campus. Even away from the physical building of the CVM, whiteness circulated through the privileging of certain spaces across campus and the community.

Next, whiteness of space deterred people of color from organizing around race or ethnicity. Organizing spaces around race or ethnicity was never discouraged, but the majority of groups organized around either the profession or concern for non-human animals. At the CVM, student groups are a common organizing practice that aims to cover many of the interests or concern outside of course work or clinics. This organizing frequently materialized either as an event or as recurring student group meetings. In either case, the organizing of bodies in student groups creates spaces for various identities and interests. At the same time, the student groups take up space through this form of organizing. In fact, as I traversed the halls of the CVM there were several bulletin boards devoted to each student group.

Out of the twenty-one student groups, only three center issues surrounding diversity: the Women's Leadership Group, Pride + Allies, and Veterinary Students as One in Culture and Ethnicity (VOICE). The only group concerned with race and ethnicity (VOICE) engages in community outreach, promotes film nights that center diversity, and advocates for an inclusive community. Still, the student organization has struggled to maintain membership despite being one of the only groups that does not collect dues. One previous member stated, "It somehow has pretty much survived by a miracle.

There's not really enough people to like fill up the spaces, but you know, we somehow get by." The spatiality of the organization remains precarious because there are not enough bodies. The dearth of members is especially surprising, because as one participant noted, "We make it clear that VOICES isn't the black club, you know, it's not the marginalized group club. It's definitely trying to be all encompassing to all groups." Typically, affinity networks or employee resource groups tend to focus on a single diversity category which centers difference *apart* (Denissen et al., 2018). On the one hand, VOICES decenters whiteness by centering difference *together*. VOICES membership struggles, however, suggest that even positioning difference together is failing to generate interest from vet students. At the same time, the explanation that VOICES is not exclusively available to racially and ethnically diverse bodies demonstrates how decentering whiteness, even in spaces intentionally organized around DEI, provides comfort to white bodies. In contrast, organizing for other student groups such as the Christian Veterinary Fellowship (CVF) came relatively easy simply because more students identified as Christian and white. In short, by backgrounding race/ethnicity and (dis)ordering efforts to collectively organize around race, the CVM spatially marginalized the affective intensity of race/ethnicity and privileged the comfort of white bodies.

White coat of resilience

At the CVM, I observed a codified expectation of resilience. Resilience manifested as individualism and the practice of adaptation during difficult times. While many scholars conceptualize resilience as an individual, organization, or community's capacity to "bounce forward" or "bounce back" from an adverse event or experience

(Houston, 2018), at the CVM, resilience was akin to what Davoudi (2018) calls self-reliant resilience. Self-reliant resilience suggests that resilience is a matter of individual responsibility, boot strap survival, and the capacity to adapt to challenges. Davoudi furthers that self-reliant resilience appears as "taken for granted, neutral, and universal goal for empowering individuals, communities, and localities" (p. 5). Likewise, Arcinega (2021) explained how whiteness centers the individual over collective engagement through economic rationality and self-interest. For this reason, self-reliant resilience and whiteness similarly rest on and privilege the notion of individualism. In practice, the atmosphere of the CVM required an enduring adaptation, and for individuals to "get used to" the intensified difficulty of vet school and the profession more broadly.

Although several participants alluded to resilience in my observations, I first encountered resilience practices during the annual white coat ceremony. The white coat ceremony takes place during fall semester of a vet student's third year. Vet students receive a white coat, pin, and name tag to highlight their transition from didactics to clinical work. The white coat ceremony is a sociomaterial practice of resilience. The ceremony promotes an atmosphere that situates resilience through the practice of coating the student. The ceremony asks that a family member, friend, or significant other place the coat on the student. In this way, students, faculty, friends, and families were affectively connected to the student and the white coat. The practice of coating celebrated survival, adaptation, and pulling oneself up by the bootstraps. For instance, one of the speakers during the ceremony stated:

> Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fall and get back up, you're gonna do both. And you're gonna learn lessons about the art and

> science of veterinary medicine. You may wish you'd done things different in your preclinical years. You may be worried about what's to come, but remember, no amount of guilt can change the past and no amount of anxiety can change the future. So just jump in and enjoy it […] When you fail, be resilient, when you succeed, be humble. When you see others struggling, be compassionate. When you've been helped, be grateful. And when you take that first step in your white coat, take a deep breath and enjoy the moment.

In this statement, resilience materializes as the capacity to "get back up" and press on by "enjoying the moment." Here, resilience positions the body to always looking forward rather than look to the past. The speech implicitly suggests feelings of guilt, regret or anxiety are the result of one's own doing and something that an individual has the ability to control. Yet, there was no mention of how these feelings were circumstances of the organizational culture or atmosphere not always of their own making. Instead, blame is placed on the individual over collective discussions that challenge inequitable organizational practices. More to the point, the white coat works to "cover up" the marks left on students during their didactic training.

By the same token, the veterinary profession perpetuates individualism in everyday work tasks. For example, veterinarians pride themselves on being "MacGyvers," doing a lot with a little, and solving problems on their own. As one participant noted about veterinarians:

> I would say they kind of have a, can do attitude and for the most part they can, um, figure out how to do things in less than ideal circumstances. They don't need the, the best equipment to do a job is what it amounts to. Um, but, uh, again,

> there's, there's a spectrum there. Um, so I mean, they, they think that they're very self-sufficient.

Here individualism and willpower constitute resilience, not one's ability to connect with other bodies, or use resources such as counseling or the African American Cultural Center. Resilience is framed as "a can-do attitude" and continued excellence "in less than ideal circumstance." This framing implicitly connects resilience with the occupational identity of veterinarians as overachievers and positions adversity as a defining characteristic of veterinary medicine. Adversity and resilience are situated around ideal bodies without familial, financial, or community obligations, who are privileged enough to manage extra-curricular activities, academic excellence, and volunteering. While promoting resilience can benefit students, this framing often ignored or diminished the variance in students' trauma or positionality. For example, the framing masked how experiences such as the death of a classmate, racial trauma, or mental health issues affect one's capacity for resilience. For example, one participant of color noted how resilience requires not thinking about race or the lack of diversity at the CVM:

> I like kind of just putting that to the side. And I, I don't know if that's a good thing or bad thing, but it's just how I cope with it in a way, because I feel like if I think about it too much, it will become the thing that I think about a lot. And maybe I'll start making up things that aren't really happening, but I feel like are happening. Like I don't want, I don't want it to like, be like, I feel like always is against me whenever nothing is, is really happening, just because I'm so in tune to it now that I, I can't like help, but feel like everybody's staring at me feel like everybody's

> judging me or, you know, I have imposter syndrome. Like I shouldn't even be here because there's nobody that looks like me and stuff like that.

For this student of color, the practice of "not thinking about" race is a sensory experience that requires a great deal of effort. This participant recognized that pulling oneself up and getting used to the fact that they are one of the few people of color at the CVM is necessary to survive vet school. Here, whiteness surfaces as an expectation of resilience that precludes them from making race, racial experience, or even microaggressions present because they could intensify the difficulty of vet school. For them, thinking about racial diversity leads to a variety of undesirable, affective outcomes that could impact the learning experience. Moreover, this participant went on to describe how "putting those feelings aside" was often isolating and pointed to the persistent lack of resources surrounding DEI. Subsequently, resilience divorced from difference benefits those who rarely have to think about DEI practices, while disproportionally affecting bodies that are forced to think about their own place within an organization or occupation.

Whiteness and the spectre of politics

Across observations and interviews, I encountered an affective desire for DEI practices. At the same time, participants in a variety of roles described the atmosphere of the CVM as politically stifling regarding DEI and difference. Rather than pointing to specific individuals as sources of entrenched whiteness, participants described an atmosphere of whiteness that was opaque and disembodied. Here, whiteness occurred as inaction and the privilege to not disrupt the atmosphere for fear of consequences. At times, resistance to change was deeply systemic and yet lacked clear points of origin. For

example, there was overwhelming sense that change only happens with help from a person in a higher position. According to one participant:

> We've done some things in the background, but it's just, it's hard. It's hard to like make a change cuz it takes so many people to get through. You can't do much. If you're a student, you know, you have basically no power. You can have, you can voice your opinion and be like, 'Hey, I want this to change, this to be better'. But if you don't have the support of someone who's higher up who has actual power to do something, you you're doing nothing. You're wasting your time.

In this statement, the agency of students hinges on relational connection to power. Power is rarely dispersed but rather concentrated amongst those in higher positions. The ability to create change then is reliant on the authority of others, while resistance to change remains invisible outside those systems of power.

The affective force of whiteness further works to destabilize collective engagement efforts and creates a sense of futility among change agents. One participant explained this common occurrence in the CVM:

> You know, I'll have in incredible conversations with like amazing people, and be like super recharged and then like, you know, you kind of get on that like high and then it just like always ends in disappointment and like especially on the DEI aspect of it, like yeah. I, I feel it's been really hard to be self-motivated to like reach out and like take the extra steps. Like just knowing that my individual, like progress is not gonna mean anything in the grand scheme of like the whole CVM.

This participant explains how connections with others provide an affective energy that compels them to pursue change efforts, but those efforts failed to affectively circulate and

ultimately to stick because change was configured through individualism rather than collective engagement. As such, this energy is often short-lived as their efforts failed to translate into substantive change. Here, the notion of inaction surfaces to describe how DEI efforts struggle to materialize through individual action. I often observed instances where CVM members were motivated to challenge practices, only to learn that their efforts were futile, despite the absence of clear obstacles or sources of opposition. The focus on individualism configures how change is enacted. During my observation of wellness day, students were asked to present on specific topics related to IDEA, such as compassion fatigue, burnout, or suicide. Presenters were students in their last year of vet school. Of the 10 presentations, only one called for collective engagement. Instead, the focus remained squarely on what could be done individually. This implicit focus on individualism reinforces whiteness as foundational to the culture of the United States.

Finally, a fear of making mistakes predominates the atmosphere through which change is promoted or enacted. Within the veterinary profession, mistakes carry sociomaterial consequences and participants perceive involvement in DEI efforts as amplifying those risks. Thus, there was a persistent fear of getting things wrong, making a mistake, or confrontation. This fear was not associated with any single entity, but points to the spectral constitution of whiteness as a looming presence:

> You know, like the politics start coming involved. People start stepping on toes, the excuses start, um, people don't wanna say the wrong thing and get themselves in trouble, you know? And so there's that line of, yes, I want to make things better, but I need to protect myself in this. I need to protect my job. Um, and so I

> think the desire is there. I think the people, like everybody involved in the CVM is ready and would be willing to back it.

For this participant, the desire for DEI practices is an abstraction that only materializes in the active promotion and doing of DEI work. Here, the spectral fear of making a mistake supports the justification for inaction. Inaction, then, seemingly benefits those who can *afford* to make a mistake. Put another way, there is privilege in not stepping on toes, making waves, or disrupting atmospheres. This spectral fear protects those who benefit the least from diversity and inclusion practices. Interestingly, those who can afford to make a mistake also fear that it could affect well-being across *their* lives. The fear of making a mistake surfaces within an atmosphere that privileges self-interest. Thus, efforts to change practices become relegated to individual action over collective organizing efforts. Thus, mistakes are intensified because they are individual failures instead of collective failures.

Overall, the atmosphere of whiteness explains how whiteness affectively circulated within the CVM. First, whiteness emerged through bodily encounter where the awareness of white bodies shaped DEI efforts to focus on increasing diversity, while neglecting the POC who are already present. This focus on bodies obscures how whiteness is diffused in and through CVM practices. Second, whiteness spatially segmented race and ethnicity as absent and (dis)ordered by avoiding the intensity of race/ethnicity and providing comfort for white bodies. Third, resilience is entangled with whiteness through self-reliance and individualism. Here, resilience promoted a “can do” attituded while marginalizing the affective intensity of difference. Finally, the spectre of politics explained how whiteness materialized through inaction and the fear of making

mistakes. Whiteness, then, was iterative process that perpetuated individualism and self-interest, while stifling collective action, and thus, reproducing whiteness.

Disordered Attunement

Massumi (2015) describes affective attunement as the "direct capture of attention and energies" by events (p. 115); In other words, affective attunement describes the *focus* of our energy or intensity. Attunement works to orient bodies, objects, and spaces into a collective affective state. Within organizations, attunement provides the conditions for expression, feeling, and movement. A story relayed by a participant in the study offers an example of what I mean by affective attunement. The participant described a student who felt well-prepared for a test, then arriving to an exam only to see that other students are stressed and anxious. The prepared student is then affectively attuned to feel stress, despite previously feeling comfortable with their level of preparation. In this example, the shared affective atmosphere of other students provides a pre-cognitive sense to others about how they should feel. Here, affective attunement lays out felt instructions for potential action (Katila et al., 2020).

While affective attunement is often described as a "shared affective experience," I encountered several instances where attunement was (dis)ordered. By (dis)order, I am referring to the concurrent opening and closing of action, trajectories, or happenings. Disordered attunement explains the instability of correlated realities, moods, and intensities that shape ordinary practice. Disordered attunement appeared in a variety of situations during my time with CVM. However, describing this experience through words alone fails to capture the complex ways attunement occurs and transforms. In this section, I use visual network analysis (VNA), to illustrate how bodies (human and non-human)

are affectively attuned in three separate CVM events. Up to this point, VNA's have been focused primarily on cognition and have not been used to describe affective experiences. However, VNA helps to visualize the effects of relations within a practice, what is mattered, and what garners attention. I argue that VNA can move beyond cognitive connections. Instead, VNA allows for the sensing and discerning of sociomaterial relations and the affective composition of practice. To form this "story" of practice, I rely on both VNA and narrative interpretation.

Example 1: Veterinary student orientation

The first time I experienced disordered attunement was during the third day of the veterinary student orientation. By the third day, my presence at the CVM had inspired several opportunities for engaging with and understanding DEI in veterinary medicine. For instance, I was approached about collaborating with a large pet food brand, encouraged to observe a clinical rotation in shelter medicine, and invited to meet with several faculty, students, and staff about the project. Nevertheless, I found myself attuned to the rhythms of VSO. I enjoyed participating in team building exercises, I felt the anxiety of students as their professors' described courses and teaching styles, and I relished the opportunity to paint a color tile that hung in the lounge of the CVM along with the incoming students. While I am not a vet student, I felt included in the CVM community. However, it was during a presentation about mental health and counseling services when this attunement shifted. The presentation took place during two separate time slots, each attended by a different half of the incoming students. The first session occurred around midday, just before lunch, and the second in the early afternoon immediately following lunch. My team was scheduled during the midday slot along with

three other teams. I decided to sit in the back row of the auditorium with student facilitators and faculty. In my field notes, I describe this affective encounter:

> The speaker has kind of a laidback approach throughout this experience, which I kind of liked, especially given the topic. What is funny is there's multiple times where the clicker isn't working and so it like jumps ahead or jumps back. And every single time the speaker referred to clicker he laughed and made light of the malfunction. But the presentation, I thought addressed some important topics. I do think it was interesting that the presentation slide included common stressors in vet med and common presenting concerns for students. There were several examples he included that felt very inclusive such as sexual orientation, gender identity, and eating disorders. I did think it was odd that there was no mention of things surrounding race or ethnicity.

In this observation, the audience's attention is directed at the speaker and his presentation slides. At the same time, the malfunction of the presentation clicker not only caused the slides to move out of order, but the speaker also forced some audience members to shift their attention onto him because he laughed and pointed out the mistake every time the clicker malfunctioned. Some audience members laughed with the speaker early on, but as he continued, the audience's laughter waned. My attention also shifted away from the clicker malfunction to point out the inclusivity/exclusivity of the content. The inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity among presenting concerns leads me to briefly make a note on my phone that race was left out. Up to this point, the audience is attuned to the speaker, the presentation, the clicker, the speaker's laughter, or the presentation content. At this point, attunement is not shared, but distributed among a

number of human and non-human actors in the scene. Figure 1 portrays a visualization of this scene.

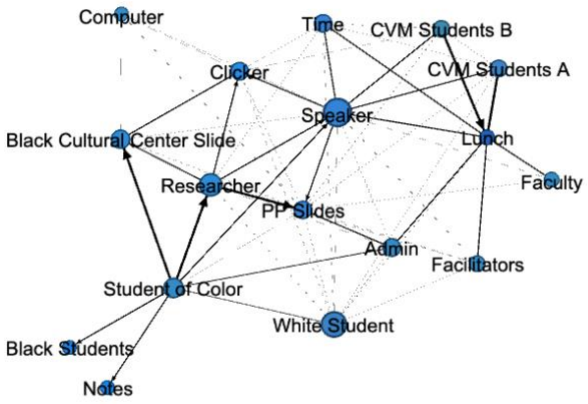

Figure 1. Formatted network visualization of the mental health presentation at VSO.

In Figure 1, the visualization illustrates how the speaker holds a central position because other actors are heavily related. The lines between the actors in the scene (human and non-human) signify the relations between actors. The density of the lines connecting actors are based on their affective attunement and intensity. For instance, I was attuned to the speakers' power point slides, the clicker, and the speaker, and thus, the lines attuned to these actors were denser. In comparison, the dotted lines represent lower density and relations that carry lower degrees of intensity.

After thirty minutes of the presentation, the affective energy noticeably slowed as students began to feel hungry. I noted students bending their necks, cracking knuckles, and shifting in their chairs because, from my perspective, they seemed ready to eat lunch. With about fifteen minutes left before the lunch break, the speaker discussed how to schedule a counseling appointment and highlighted available campus resources. I noted:

> The speaker discusses campus resources such as women's center, the multicultural center, and the LGBTQ+ center. For each one of the resources, the speaker kind of talks about them for like a minute or so per slide. I wouldn't say he was extensive, but it was enough to sell them. He then moves to the black cultural center. Um, he says that it is a resource for African Americans and then the presentation ends. It felt really abrupt and kind of was brushed aside. I'm watching this happen and I was like, 'oh, well, he, um, he didn't really go over this,' but I didn't really think anything of it cognitively. But as I'm getting up from my seat, the only other person of color comes up to me and expresses frustration, anxiousness about what happened, how they felt, because they were trying to take notes for other students of color. I could tell that the student was physically, uh, shaken up by this experience, which again, I read it as something that was, I just, kind of read it as dismissive

In this observation, I noticed how quickly the speaker clicked off the slide about the black cultural center. This is the same center previously skipped by my tour leader and now seemingly dismissed in a much larger setting during a presentation on campus resources. Unfortunately, my ability to process was cut short because the rest of the audience was headed down the hallway to grab their lunch. It was then that a student of color

approached me. My attention quickly shifted to her. She said, “Did you see that?” I immediately began to feel how she was feeling in that moment. The intensity of this encounter caused me to feel anxious and upset about the situation. We barely knew each other, and yet there was a felt energy that pulled us together. When I asked the student later why she approached me, the student stated:

> Like I looked around for, for like once I saw somebody, like me, you know, that's like the thing, you just approach people that look like you, that would probably understand. I, I know if I turned to my friend and was like, ‘did you see that?’ She’d be like, see what? But like, I go up to you, ‘And we didn't even say, but three words, ‘did you see that?’ Four words. And it's like, I saw that. That's like the difference of like having somebody else, that looks like you.

In Figure 1 the student of color is heavily attuned to both the black cultural center and to me. The presence of a person of color creates a sense of shared affective experience in the moment. In contrast, the student’s relation to the speaker, faculty, and other CVM students suggests a faint connection. Figure 1 depicts how the student of color is clustered further away from other actors in the scene. In a subsequent interview the student of color further explained this affective experience:

> For the last slide to be, ‘this is the black cultural center’ Done. I was like, ‘What?’ In that moment, like I said, first impressions, they really matter. And I was like, I just, I don't feel like I'd be comfortable going to this person and talking about things that I experience because I’m black. I feel like I can't talk to anybody in my class because nobody really understands. And then you just wanna vent to somebody, you know, the speaker, but in the back of my mind, I'm thinking, but

> does he really understand or does he really care just because of how fast he clicked off of that thing?

Here, disordered attunement begins to take shape. First, the conditions of expression suggest this student does not feel comfortable talking to other students in her class. In the same vein, there is a feeling of promise and threat for the student. There is promise in the sense that she could talk to the counselor about her experience. There is also a threat that the counselor may dismiss her feelings. For this reason, potential trajectories of action begin to open and close.

At the same time, the other (predominantly white) bodies in the room at least appear unaffected by the experience. In Figure 1 the CVM students, facilitators, and faculty are primarily concerned with eating lunch. As such, lunch is presented with weighted connections between actors, and thus contributing to the disordered attunement of the scene. In contrast, the student of color is not attuned to lunch in the same way. In fact, her attention is not on lunch at all, but on the black students on other teams, her notes, on me, and on talking to an administrator about the situation. She explained, “for once I didn't feel like alone, and then it, like, it gave me confidence or like the motivation to go to talk to an administrator and say, [the other black students] should not see what we just saw because that was bad.” The affective intensity of encountering another person of color (me) motivated to her seek out new trajectories and act on behalf of other vet students of color.

Finally, in Figure 1, the sociomaterial relations also gain authority in the scene. Specifically, the speaker is affectively attuned to the clicker and to time. In fact, the speaker explained how both the clicker and time shaped the reality of the scene. First, the

clicker malfunctioned during the black cultural center slide causing it to shift and end the presentation. Second, the speaker's presentation had gone over by a few minutes. Not only was he attuned to the resonance of time, but the affective energy of the audience suggested there was a desire to eat lunch. In this situation, the collective attunement of the actors is disordered causing a number of potential trajectories to surface. While the speaker's intent was not to dismiss the black cultural center, the impact on the student of color was profound.

In many ways, the scene unfolds within an atmosphere of whiteness that creates the conditions for expression and movement. As previously mentioned, the conditions of whiteness—the prevalence of white bodies, the lack of spaces that foreground race/ethnicity, the can-do attitude, the push for self-reliance, and the inaction spurned by self-interest—determined how all bodies, especially POC navigate and experience the CVM. Thus, the dismissal of the black cultural center surfaces as a microaggression, albeit unintentional, that is affectively intensified because of the proximal encounter with other POCs (i.e. me and the POCs on other teams). The atmosphere of whiteness becomes (dis)ordered because a) the student of color was emboldened by the bodily encounter with me, b) the student makes race/ethnicity present by challenging the dismissal of the black cultural center, c) allows the experience to affect her, rather than suppressing the microaggression, d) promotes the student of color to act and change the ordinary practice.

Most importantly, for the student of color, a potential trajectory opens to motivate action. The student of color could have waited until later to write an email or set up a meeting to speak with an administrator. Instead, bodily encounter gives her the

confidence to act in the moment, or what Massumi (2015) calls *immediacy*. Here, immediacy is not about pre-determined directions, but about "capturing the intensity of the in-bracing to remain correlated, to coordinate, to move inventively together in concerted action" (p. 117). From this point of view, disordered attunement shows how capitalizing on the immediacy of the event allows for concerted action, but from different angles.

Example 2: Diversity committee meeting #1

Two months into the data collection process, I was invited to join a meeting of the college's standing committee on diversity. The meeting was attended by a dedicated group of faculty, staff, and students volunteering their time and energy to improve IDEA at the college. In example 2, disordered attunement manifested during the first diversity meeting at the CVM. As context, the disorganization of the meeting was palpable from the outset. The original date of the meeting had to be rescheduled. Many of the committee members had conflicts with the new date and were either not able to attend or they arrived late. Within the network analysis, not all actors identified were temporally present. The presence of some actors materialized in the sense of their "mattering," that is these actors mattered in the situation and affected potential trajectories that emerged.

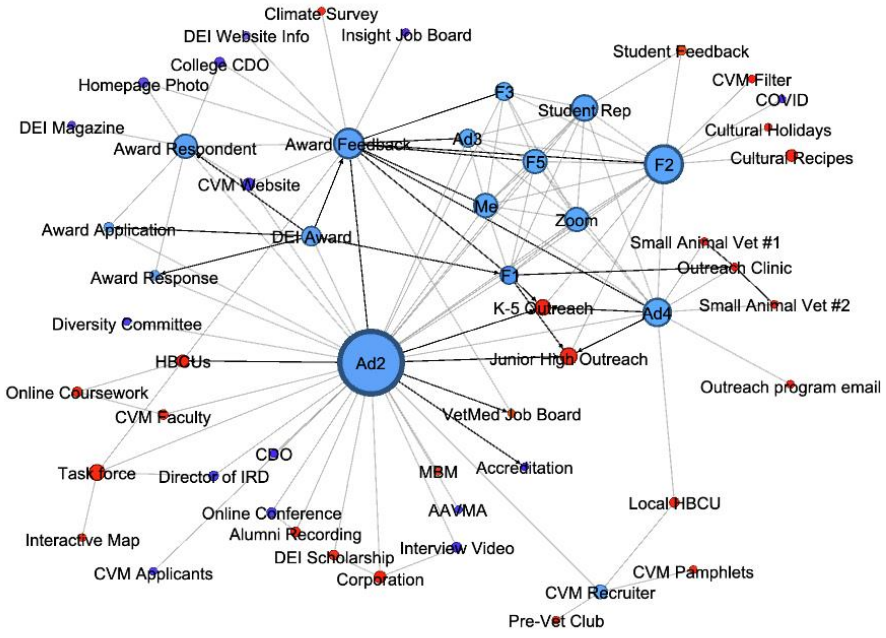

Figure 2: Blue colored nodes represent actors that were temporally present in the meeting; red-colored nodes are potential trajectories that surfaced; Purple-colored nodes represent actors made present within the network, but failed to capture attention.

The actor rendered most important in the meeting was the administrator (Ad2) who led the meeting. This actor assumes a central position in the network. During the meeting, the administrator wanted to focus on a diversity award that the organization had applied for but not been granted and the feedback from the Awards Chair for the award-granting organization. For this reason, the award and the feedback gain authority in the meeting. The award feedback served as the basis for how the CVM could fix issues with diversity, equity, and inclusion. The feedback cited the lack of explicit information about diversity on the college's website. For example, the website did not have a mission statement or goals of the college related to DEI. Furthermore, the feedback noted the whiteness of students and faculty and the disproportionate number of male faculty in

leadership and in photos. As such, the feedback not only had authority in the space, it also attuned actors to focus on increasing racial diversity at the CVM. From there, the meeting spawned a litany of trajectories for specifically increasing racial diversity and displaying racial diversity in demonstrative ways. However, the potential trajectories are centrally focused on the students, rather than faculty and staff. Attempts at diversifying the faculty were dismissed because the hiring processes are complex and lengthy. Here, the meeting is affectively attuned to the potentiality of increasing the racial profile of the student body.

Next, the red nodes in Figure 2 illustrate the potential trajectories identified for increasing diversity. These trajectories included a pre-vet club, K-5 outreach, HBCUs, an outreach clinic, small animal mentors, junior high outreach, minorities in biomedical sciences (MBM), a task force, and an online course to help minority students. Each of these trajectories were potential pathways for increasing diversity. However, attunement remained disordered because the number of trajectories was overwhelming. As such, trajectories communicatively materialized, but did not affectively stick because of their abundance. Moreover, many of the trajectories were made present in the meeting but were individually situated. For example, the K-5 outreach program was not a collective practice. The program relied on a single faculty member and a few students who were unable to devote adequate time to the endeavor because coursework was so demanding.

Alongside efforts to increase diversity, actors were also attuned to visible representations of diversity. In Figure 2, the administrator discussed an interview with a first year CVM student of color who received a DEI scholarship. This point of the meeting centered on how the CVM could edit and display the interview on the website.

The justification here was to highlight students of color and show why they chose the school. Similarly, they talked about a recording of an alumnus DVM of color who was an undergraduate at the school but attended a different vet school. It was suggested that the organization could showcase the video and invite the DVM of color to come to speak at the CVM. In both trajectories, intentions were to increase diversity by visually framing the school as a welcoming space for people of color.

In short, attunement was disordered because the number of potential trajectories affectively overwhelmed the actors. Thus, actors found it difficult to know what trajectories they should pursue. I found actors to be so overwhelmed by the number of trajectories that action after the meeting failed to materialize and trajectories failed to stick. This failure to stick relies on circulation to generate an affective intensity. More specifically, there was an excess of bodily excitation toward increasing and displaying diversity because these efforts connected to the atmosphere of whiteness and the veterinary identity.

First, there was motivation to increase and display diversity because a) the CVM envisioned diversity as visible and b) there is an overwhelming presence of white bodies at the CVM. Second, increasing diversity through pipeline practices connected racially/ethnically diverse children to the profession and to non-human animals. As such, exclusive selection practices (calling, shadowing, overachievement) are sustained rather than challenged or transformed. Subsequently, the atmosphere of whiteness and the veterinary identity work to shape the conditions of expression and trajectories. Most importantly, two trajectories received very little attention: a) efforts to support current racial diversity, gender disparities, or inequity and wellbeing, and b) addressing inequity

of ordinary practices. Time and energy were disproportionately allocated to discussion of awards that might signal diversity rather than on nurturing existing diversity.

Example 3: Diversity committee meeting #2

Three months after the initial meeting, the DEI committee met again to further discuss diversity at the college. In the second diversity meeting, disordered attunement surfaced differently. Here, the meeting had some attendees from the first meeting, but the feeling was that this meeting was entirely separate. The first DEI meeting had not designated someone to take notes, so most of the information from that meeting was dispersed and lost. Second, there were several new members in this meeting who were not privy to any of the details from the first meeting. Given the intense demands on the time of committee members and the abundance of trajectories at the end of the first meeting, little action was taken between the two meetings.

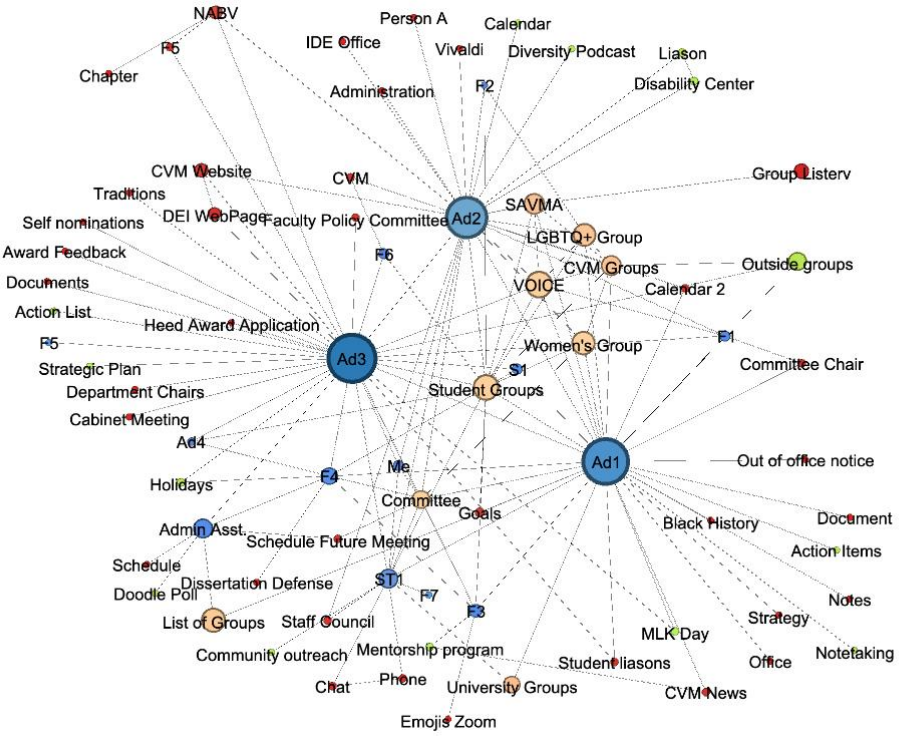

Figure 3: Blue-colored nodes represent actors temporally present in the meeting; Orange-colored nodes were actors that materialized and gained authority in the meeting; green-colored nodes were potential trajectories that surfaced: red-colored nodes represent actors and their relations made present in the meeting but failed to capture attention.

In the second meeting, several administrators surfaced in a central position. In the first meeting, it was one administrator who held authority over the meeting. Here, Ad1, Ad2, and Ad3 all have several relations and potential trajectories. During the first meeting, the actors' attention was centered on an award application and the award feedback. From there, a plethora of trajectories emerged largely focused on increasing diversity and visibly displaying diversity. In this second meeting, the award materializes but fails to gain authority. Here, the award fails to stick because there was no circulation through email, meeting minutes, or collective discussions. Instead, Figure 3 illustrates how the largest nodes outside of temporally present actors are groups. The figure also highlights "student groups" as a larger node alongside specific groups such as VOICE and the LGBTQ+ group. In this case, *student groups* represent the collective of exclusively student organizations whereas *CVM groups* represents the entirety of groups at the CVM.

Groups are rendered important because they operate as perceived safe spaces and sources for DEI efforts. For example, Veterinary Students as One in Culture & Ethnicity (VOICE) focuses on social and cultural awareness around race and ethnicity outside of the academic curriculum. The LGBTQ+ group offers emotional support to LGBTQ+ students and provides resources for allies. The women's group centers on helping women develop leadership skills. Finally, Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA) is the national professional association for veterinary students focused on

providing financial support and other resources to all the student groups at the CVM. SAVMA hosts social activities and gives students a representative body.

Next, there was an affective energy of frustration regarding the [in]effectiveness of the committee and the lack of communication between groups. In particular, several participants from the meeting espoused their frustration:

> **Participant 1**: I mean, I don't know, we have too many groups. I don't think we can have enough people working on these efforts. But what I would say is that there's not any coordination really. So, I think like that's a big issue just from like an organizational standpoint is like none of us know what the other people are doing, unless you tend to float in those similar circles professionally or socially.
>
> **Participant 2**: There was a student lead effort yesterday about DEI. Like there's just multiple wonderful things, but just different. And there, similar to what was said, there's no coordination. And I feel like if we had that coordinated effort, it could, you could have just a much more, a larger impact.
>
> **Scott**: I definitely would say that it is just, it is very fractured. And that fracturing isn't necessarily that there are too many parts, right? I think there should be these multiple collective parts all working together, but there needs to be organization around that. There needs to be organizing, there needs to be structure. And I think that comes with everyone talking together and also taking seriously the roles and tasks that are offered out. (Recorded interview)

Here, I, along with other participants were intensely attuned to the lack of structure within the committee and the lack of coordination with other groups. The energy within the meeting affected everyone differently. For instance, I was asked to provide input and

feeling like a broken record because I had expressed, when prompted, these same sentiments in the previous meeting. Other participants were frustrated that this lack of structure affected the committee's ability to communicate and be visible throughout the college.

Interestingly, actors were not concerned with the CVM groups' actions but wanted to ensure that the groups were visible and included in future DEI meetings. Committee members expressed concern that the lack of communication between CVM groups affected DEI efforts because multiple groups were doing similar work. For example, two different groups were engaged in community outreach but were not talking to each other. Including these groups in future meetings surfaced as the largest concern because, as previously mentioned, student groups play a major role in the vet school experience. At one point, attunement centered on constructing another meeting that would include members from each of the groups along with faculty committees and the diversity committee. This potential meeting was meant to create a space for the groups to discuss their efforts and communicate about DEI issues within the college. Ironically, some of the groups were present, but were not asked to discuss their current DEI efforts because the meeting centrally focused on cultivating another space for them to communicate about those efforts.

Actors also expressed concerns about the disorganization of the DEI committee. Namely, there were no designated roles for committee members. In the meeting, I added that a secretary was invaluable because documenting present actors, ideas, and connections could help nurture potential trajectories. The meeting, then shifted attunement to center on nominating someone to serve as the secretary. Surprisingly, a

secretary was elected by the committee during this meeting. Like the first example, the participants created a necessary role largely because they capitalized on the immediacy of the moment. Unfortunately, this was the only role that materialized during the meeting.

Beyond groups and structuring the committee, actors were also focused on notetaking, strategic plans, the DEI committee webpage, Black History Month, MLK day, a DEI podcast about veterinary medicine, the book *Whistling Vivaldi*, and community outreach. Like the previous meeting, disordering of attunement occurred through the dispersal of attention to a plethora of objects. Here, student groups gained attention and authority during the meeting, but like other trajectories such as structuring the committee, Black History Month, and MLK day, attention was disordered and thus prevented their affective circulation. In the first DEI meeting, participants were so overwhelmed with potential trajectories that it delimited their capacity to circulate and gain intensity. The lack of intensity associated with these trajectories prevented trajectories and ideas from sticking. Much like the first meeting, this DEI meetings' trajectories failed to affectively stick and motivate future action because affective circulation was limited. Instead, potential trajectories dissipated, and the efforts never materialized. For instance, the potential for CVM groups to collectively meet, the structuring of the DEI committee, and the communication about groups efforts failed to develop after the meeting owing to the same limitations that manifested in the aftermath of the first meeting.

To summarize, attunement commonly demonstrates how bodies, objects, spaces and ideas are collectively attuned such that conditions of possibility and expression are cultivated and determined. I put forth three examples, which illustrate how (dis)ordered

attunement differentially shapes and reshapes the conditions and the experiences around DEI and the trajectories that emerge from those conditions. In the first example, the bodily encounter between myself and the student of color illustrates how feeling was transmitted between bodies and how my bodily presence (dis)ordered the atmosphere of the event. Here, bodily encounter allowed for a new trajectory to emerge and motivated the student of color to not only draw attention to the microaggression, but to inspire action in the immediacy. Next, in both diversity meetings, attention was dispersed among a plethora of trajectories. The overwhelming number of trajectories did not extend beyond the meetings because there were limited resources and limited affective circulation. In limiting affective circulation, trajectories fail to stick and the potential for future action dissipates. In short, (dis)ordered attunement exposes how potential trajectories and paths only stick if bodies capitalize on the immediacy of the event and/or find ways to circulate the connections so that they gain intensity and motivate future action.

Neutrality of Practices

During my interviews and observations, I discovered that ordinary practices were viewed as separate from other practices, especially DEI practices. Ordinary practices surfaced as taken for granted, assumed, and separate. The ordinariness of practices presumed a sense of neutrality because practices were viewed as naturalized and ahistorical. For this reason, ordinary practices within the CVM were rarely seen as gendered, raced, or generally inequitable. This perceived neutrality was only disrupted when practices were blatantly and overtly discriminatory. Neutrality manifested in the a)

separation between ordinary practices and DEI practices and b) assumption that practices were affect neutral.

First, a neutrality of practices rendered DEI as separate from organizational practices, technical aspects of work (i.e., conducting an exam or describing an animal's disease or ailment), and professional performance. For example, one participant stated "We think about the science. We think about the medicine and we, it, it's not that that we're anti DEI. I just don't think we ever get around to thinking of it." This separation was further apparent in veterinarians' difficulty understanding how DEI fits in their technical work. As one participant said:

> I don't know how to do that. I don't know how to incorporate that into what I do, you know, I'm with the students to teach them about cardiology or infectious disease. And, and I don't really know how to do add in DEI stuff. Very seldom does a topic come up. As an administrator, I could see that we could do other things we could, we could have, um, trainings on implicit bias. We could talk about what implicit bias is and how we think about it. Uh, we could, I could see incorporating it into courses like professionalism courses, having outside speakers.

For both participants, "thinking about" and "doing" DEI are separate from science and medicine. This separation creates cognitive barriers to incorporating DEI into instruction about medicine. In the second statement, the participant explains how DEI efforts such as implicit bias trainings, a professionalism course, or having outside speakers are all plausible, whereas including DEI into courses about cardiology or infectious disease is positioned as difficult or even distracting.

I frequently observed neutral *professional performance practices* or practices that are not technical work but are focused on knowledge production and professional development. First, during VSO there were a number of team building exercises meant to instill leadership or cultivate communication and trust. These exercises provided a symbolic connection with participants in the moment but failed to translate into a real clinical practice environment. For instance, one teambuilding exercise called traffic-jam was intended to teach students how to communicate effectively. My field notes described:

> Two groups stood on paper plates in an s-shaped line with one empty plate in the center. The two groups faced each other. The goal of the exercise was for each person to get to the other side of line without moving to an occupied plate and without moving more than two spaces per move. The solution to the exercise is not intuitive and requires communication between the participants. Um, so watching the students do this exercise again, it's rooted in team building and, and connection and, um, communicating with each other and working through it together. Um, and so at first, the first time they do, every time they would mess up, we would say start over. They would say, start over, start over. And that happened probably about three or four times. Starting over often happened when students were talking and being verbal.

The task posed several difficulties, such as managing competing suggestions or too many people speaking at the same time. Students expressed frustration when mistakes were made because the entire team had to start over. On the surface, the teambuilding exercise seemed to help students learn how to communicate. Students were praised for taking on

leadership roles within the group. Unfortunately, the complexity of communication and the ways that communication happens in various environments or contexts was not captured by the exercise. The requirement to start the task over after each error reinforced a fear of making mistakes in interaction. There was a socialization and an expectation to get it right the first time. As such, the teambuilding exercise promoted effective communication or leadership based on ideal workers in ideal and neutral situations. Yet, scholars have noted how teambuilding exercises privilege masculinity and reinforce gender bias (Lou et al., 2021). The effects of these exercises rarely translated to the teaching hospital where a confluence of sociomaterial factors, including power dynamics, physical space, ability, and race affect how clinicians and students communicate with each other. These team-building exercises are extraordinary practices intended to influence and shape everyday practices.

Alongside team-building practices, I also observed a series of well-being day presentations held on the second Monday of a two-week rotation on shelter medicine. In this case, students presented about several issues that affect veterinary medicine practitioners, such as compassion fatigue, burnout, suicide, boundaries, or conflict negotiation. In every presentation, students framed these common experiences as decidedly neutral and separate from the ordinary practices of veterinary medicine. In other words, these presentations surrounding wellness, well-being, and DEI were not only framed in individualistic terms, but each presentation assumed that experiences such as creating boundaries or conflict negotiation were entirely neutral from ordinary practices. Here, the atmosphere of whiteness resurfaced to shape the conditions with which students address issues of well-being. For example, one presentation defined burnout and provided

cues for how to spot burnout in yourself and others. Implicit in this definition was the notion of self-reliance and resilience, whereby individuals are expected to "manage" their own burnout. Burnout, then, was never connected to the everyday expectation of sacrificing one's time and body for the profession. Furthermore, discussion of burnout also failed to demonstrate how burnout manifests across class, gender, and racial differences. By assuming neutrality, veterinarians ignored how problems such as burnout or conflict are fundamentally entangled with other practices and how those other practices are entangled with DEI practices.

Next, assumed neutrality further surfaced within everyday curriculum practices. One participant explained how the curriculum did not consider traumatic experiences such as the death of a student:

> I would say most students never really reach a point when they do need like the above and beyond. Like for instance, like with me and several other students, we had the incident where we saw the student die. And so, we had a lot of issues just with like going back into classes, going back into exams and they're like, well, we don't really have anything in place as to how to handle this. So, you're just gonna kind of take exams as scheduled. And we were like, okay, well we just saw someone die. Like we can't do that. And so they're like, okay, well do you wanna push things back and maybe do like, you can take a block off and then we'll just push your first clinical schedule back one. And I'm like, well, no, that's gonna put us a full block behind.

In this example, the student outlines how the curriculum practices such as classes and exams do not account for varied, challenging, and traumatic circumstances. Similarly, the

students who witnessed a student die from head trauma were then also expected to attend a class lecture about cranial trauma in non-human animals. The students were able to skip the lecture by explaining how this could trigger an affective response, but, the lecture was not an isolated practice. Lecture attendance was linked to extra credit points. In this instance, extra credit points held affective value because the trauma of the event had affected students' ability to adequately prepare for the exams.

Curriculum practices are positioned as neutral and disconnected from other practices. As such, attempts to make curriculum practices inclusive were never considered because they were taken for granted. Moreover, the student then explains that the options for pushing exams back were insufficient. Specifically, pushing exams back meant dropping down to another class, or putting students a full instructional block behind. While this might seem like a reasonable option, the practice of overachievement conditions students to perceive pushing back a block or dropping down to another class as a failure. This tension is intensified from that fact that staying on track with courses, particularly with tests and exams are affectively charged practices that resonate in the ordinariness of vet school.

As noted earlier, students are selected as overachievers in part because falling behind in vet school is not an option. Most importantly, the neutrality of practices hinges on reactivity rather than on a proactive approach to issues of inclusion and well-being. This assumption ignores how experiencing things such as a traumatic event may require rest rather than continuing with business as usual. This is especially true across race, gender, sexuality, ability, and class differences where trauma can exacerbate anxiety and depression (Kiles et al., 2021).

Practices as affect-neutral

A neutrality of practices precluded the CVM from recognizing the affective intensity of practices and objects. Namely, Reckwitz (2017) argues that practices and objects are intensely charged despite being cast off as ordinary, and thus, affect neutral. This assumed neutrality constrains efforts to change practices because affective intensity is routinely hidden from view. For example, one student wanted to add pronouns to intake forms and to name tags in effort to create more inclusivity:

> I know a lot of students are very uncomfortable and even some of the faculty members are uncomfortable. If they see someone and they're like, oh crap. How do I go about asking about pronouns? So many people are just uncomfortable saying, what do you prefer to go by? How would you like me to address you? And so, kind of our solution was like, okay, what if we just take that question away for people and just have it on intake forms so that people can specify what they would like to go by. And then there's not that awkwardness of students or faculty being uncomfortable. Um, and then the final thing was our name tags, getting pronouns put on for ourselves

Here, the student perceives both intake forms, name tags, and ID badges to be affect neutral. The student acknowledges the intensity of awkwardness and anxiety in the communicative practice of asking about pronouns. The student attempts to counteract that intensity by connecting pronouns to the neutral, taken for granted practices of intake forms, name tags, and ID badges. This student, then, had several meetings with faculty, administrators, campus administrators, and even the medical school to figure out how to

get the change approved. Many of the faculty, staff, and administrators openly supported this DEI effort. However, the student found it difficult to get the initiative enacted.

In the CVM and the teaching hospital, badges and name tags are incredibly important. Students and faculty are always expected to display ID badges. However, during my observation, this practice of displaying your ID was not consistent and was frequently taken for granted. There were countless times when ID badges were hidden or left in pockets. That said, the act of putting pronouns on an ID badge became intensely affectively charged and receive significant pushback.

> Yeah. So, like with the pronouns, like I, I really think like getting this pronoun stickers has like been like biggest monumental like change and it's ridiculous that it is when it's such a little thing. Like for such a tiny thing for literally providing stickers to your students and faculty and staff and it's had like, is that big of an ordeal? It's really sad. It was not well received. Especially just like the push to get the pronouns on the badges. It was like we can't change the name tags. Like we can't change them.

This student explains how placing stickers with a person's pronouns on their name tags was laborious and challenging. Here, pronoun stickers are seen as relatively minor for most people because pronouns, name tags, and badges are commonly taken for granted. Yet, there was repeated push back from undisclosed angles. At one point, the hospital approved stickers for nametags. They were printed and ready to be handed out to people who chose to adopt the practice. However, the pronoun stickers were never distributed. In fact, I found out during an interview with a participant:

Speaker 2: Yeah. Um, at one point in time they had sent out an email saying like, "Hey, you guys can get the stickers or whatever for your ID badges that'll have your pronouns".

Speaker 1: Nice!

Speaker 2: Those were redacted for some reason. I'm not sure why, but they were taken away so we can no longer have those, uh, like within a week, like nobody even had time to get them. Um, yes. Something with the politics of it was not allowed.

Speaker 1: And was that ever discussed? Was it ever, were you ever told why?

Speaker 2: No.

In this interaction, the student acknowledged there was a point at which this practice was approved. However, the spectre of politics illustrates how the practices of name tags, intake forms, or ID badges were not affect-neutral but intensely charged. Moreover, their affective intensity was obscured because there was no single source of disapproval. Even the hospital director failed to get an adequate answer.

On the one hand, it was noted that putting a sticker on an ID badge or name tag was deemed to be against university policy. On the other hand, the human medical school had an established practice of placing pronouns on ID badges and name tags. As was seen here, ID badges are taken for granted and situated as neutral, yet, efforts to make changes to this practice revealed an object that was intensely charged.

Additionally, I observed how curriculum and instruction practices were perceived as neutral, but were particularly affectively charged, especially with students. For instance, a participant explained how several students were "upset" with changes to the

structure of a course. According to the participant, the changes were intended to create a more inclusive learning environment. Students' affective intensity resulted in feeling like "a bunch of Guinea pigs." First, the comparison to "Guinea pigs" implies that students are "helpless" and "being experimented on" by the instructor. Yet, changing a course prior to the semester is a common academic practice. At the same time, the instructor's practice of "flipping the classroom" to be more "inclusive" resulted in significantly more work for students, such as longer presentation videos and extra prep work prior to class. Indeed, the instructor's actions assume the class is neutral and disconnected from other practices. It should be noted that professors at the CVM carry an immense level of authority. As one participant stated, "every professor who teaches their course, their course is the most important." Yet, the intensity of the curriculum illustrates how the instructor's attempt to change the class format was not neutral but bundled with other courses, the expectation to stay on track, and other normative practices within the CVM.

Lastly, another participant described how their teaching practices were intended to demonstratively show inclusivity through the art of drag. This participant even showed me their wall of outfits for engaging in this performance. According to the participant:

> I pretend that I have phone calls from people who are, uh, wanting to know, uh, uh, you know, what's the website that they could go to. And so then I play these various characters and if I have time, I put a wig on, I have a complete repertoire of wigs.

Here, the participant's teaching about toxicology cases sometimes results in putting on wigs to play various characters. Dressing up in drag functions as way to showcase the diversity of clients and provide levity around emotionally charged experiences. However,

this did not resonate with some students, despite engaging in this practice every instructional period. He explained:

> When I went ahead and, uh, was doing my voices, uh, and was wearing a wig, I actually had a student complain to my boss that they thought I was mentally ill and should not be teaching students, because I was putting on wigs and doing voices and they thought I had lost it. When in fact, I'm trying to give them an appreciation of the wide range of different people that we deal with on a regular basis and trying to get them to put that together. But you know, I just think, equity, diversity and inclusion should be a common thread for everything we do. So that every decision that we make is equitable.

In this situation, the act of putting on a "wig" and doing "voices" is not neutral, but affectively charged. Not only did a student register a complaint, but the student also framed the performative act of playing characters as "mentally ill." The problematic framing of difference and mental illness carries a great deal of intensity that shapes future actions. In both examples, an instructor's attempt to change ordinary practices lead to a visceral reaction by students. Within the atmosphere of whiteness, students commonly expect that courses follow a pattern and are unquestionably rigorous. When instructors diverge from this structure, the affective intensity of the practice was revealed. Thus, the hiddenness of a practices' affective intensity form conditions that appear neutral and ordinary which, subsequently, frames the "struggle" or "tension" as neutral. In other words, there is a struggle over practices. However, the struggle is not neutral because the conditions in which the struggle takes place can determine the agentic possibilities. At the

CVM, neutrality of practices emerged within an atmosphere of whiteness and an affective economy of veterinary identity that determined social order.

Overall, assumed neutrality shows how ordinary practices are separated from DEI practices, *other* ordinary practices, technical work, and professional performance. First, professional performance practices perpetuated whiteness by framing team building and presentations as idealized and individualistic. Yet, both practices reinforced self-reliant resilience and gender biases. Second, the assumed neutrality of taken for granted curriculum practices failed to proactively consider traumatic experiences and that curriculum practices were bundled with other ordinary practices such as overachievement. Finally, practices were situated as affect-neutral despite being intensely charged.

In the next chapter, I first discuss how the findings identified here answer my research questions. I then discuss how the findings contribute to the literature on IDEA, practice theory, affect theory, and communication. Next, I unpack the implications for practice in the areas of DEI and veterinary medicine. Finally, I address the limitations, strengths, and future directions for the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

IDEA scholarship and practice are informed by an ontology of separation. This dissertation exposes how this ontology manifests in the context of veterinary medicine. Here, I propose a relational approach to IDEA informed by practice, affect, and communication. In this chapter, I first summarize how the findings detailed in chapter four address my research questions. I then discuss the implications of this study and its unique contributions to diversity scholarship, practice theory, affect theory, and communication. Next, I consider the implications of these findings for organizational practice before finally identifying limitations, strengths, future directions, and opportunities for additional research.

Ordinary Practices

The first research question asked, "How do ordinary practices and IDEA practices produce and sustain social (dis)order?" Across my participant observations, interviews, and document analysis, I observed how the occupational identity of veterinary medicine was steeped in exclusivity that manifested in ordinary practice. Exclusivity often determined the nature of work, who gained entry, and how membership was sustained. Through ordinary practices, social (dis)order was sustained through human animal/non-human animal connection, self-sacrificing practices, and exclusive selection practices.

First, non-human animals were positioned as central to the identity of veterinary work, and therefore, distinguished veterinary medicine from other occupations like human medicine or animal science. To establish their jurisdiction over non-human animal welfare, ordinary practices like branding, curriculum, and clinical work frequently prioritized the small animal/companion animal template. The small animal/companion animal template prioritizes work with cats, dogs, rabbits, etc. I argue that the assumptions

of this small animal template are grounded in privilege such that race, class, nationality, and religion all shaped access to and interactions with non-human animals. The small animal template further limited emphasis on alternative forms of work such as medical research, food animal practice, and government employment that could offer a wider variety of outcomes and perhaps appeal to a more diverse group of prospective veterinarians.

The exclusivity of calling, experiential socialization, and overachievement determined who entered the profession. For instance, participants described how shadowing a veterinarian and demonstrative overachievement were expectations within the selection process. Here, maintaining academic excellence, extracurricular activities, and shadowing were not only expectations, but bolstered the competitiveness of a prospective student's application. As with the small animal template, privilege surfaced in admissions practices to exclude those who did not have existing connections to veterinarians, worked a full-time job, or decided to apply to vet school later in their academic careers. Self-sacrificing practices reinforced an expectation that to be a veterinarian, one must sacrifice their time and their body for the profession and for the welfare of non-human animals. These practices privileged certain types of bodies that were physically, emotionally, and mentally capable of meeting the demanding expectations. At the same time, self-sacrificing practices forced bodies to either conform to these practices or risk exclusion.

Along with exclusivity, ordinary occupational practices produced a separation between human animals and non-human animals. First, veterinarians resisted society's anthropocentric relationship with non-human animals by centering occupational identity

and work practices around non-human animal health and welfare. Participants described pursuing the veterinary profession because of their devotion to non-human animals. However, rather than flattening the distinction between human animals and non-human animals, prioritizing non-human animal health and welfare often emerged at the expense of human animal welfare. Participants described how a dislike for humans and love for animals was a common reason for pursuing the profession. Veterinarians, students, and/or technicians were frequently forced to choose between bodily necessities and the immediate attention of non-human animals. Furthermore, practices concerned with human animals were particularly sparse in the veterinary curriculum.

Moreover, the separation between human animals and non-human animals situated DEI practice as a human animal issue. As such, DEI was separated from the ordinary practices of veterinary medicine. This separation routinely affected how DEI was produced in the CVM. For instance, sacrifices of time were expected for non-human animal welfare and for the profession. Yet, this expectation was rarely translated to DEI practices. While there were participants who devoted considerable time to DEI practices, many individuals were already stretched too thin in terms of their responsibilities. In this way, non-human animal welfare took priority over DEI issues because human animal concerns were regarded as separate from veterinary practice. This separation also affected attempts to change ordinary practices. In essence, DEI efforts failed to stick because of the association with human animals.

Affect

The next research question addressed the role of affect in constituting and shaping practices. Research question two asked “How does affect configure and reconfigure

bodies and practices?" As a configuring force, affect constituted the occupational identity of the profession, determined the trajectories, movements, and actions around DEI, and illustrated the hidden affective intensity within practices.

First, the occupational practices of veterinary medicine were affectively associated to produce an affective economy. This affective economy revealed how signs, symbols, objects, and practices gained affective value through circulation. For instance, the expectation that veterinarians should suffer was intensified through the circulation of stories about suicide, frequent repetition of suicide statistics in the profession, and programs such as Not One More Vet. The circulation of these signs, symbols, and objects caused them to stick together such that suicide is viewed as an epidemic within the profession. While some veterinarians implicitly framed this epidemic as a symbol of their devotion to non-human animals and the profession, some participants pointed out how the suicide "ranking" was incorrectly associated with the profession.

Similarly, the number of shadowing hours has increased over time largely because vet school is extremely competitive. While shadowing provides students with a hands-on experience, a greater number of hours may not capture the quality of one's experience. Still, the practice of shadowing circulates through students' applications, class admission snapshots, and mentorship programs. This constant circulation changed shadowing practices from experiential socialization to a commodity that holds affective value in the competitive marketplace of vet school acceptance. Furthermore, occupational practices were configured together (i.e. time, corporeal, overachievement) to resemble a coherent occupational identity. On closer inspection, the suffusion of affect suggests that veterinary identity was heavily predicated on attachment and adherence to the profession

and to non-human animal welfare. Here, adherence to time or shadowing was not explicitly articulated, but acutely felt and reiterated in ordinary practice.

In addition to the production of an affective economy, affect determined trajectories, movement, and action around DEI. In many ways, movement and action in IDEA were affectively configured to focus on increasing racial and ethnic diversity and showcasing visible representation. Pipeline practices served as the dominant DEI path for the CVM and the veterinary profession. Participants not only discussed their engagement with these efforts, but pipeline practices also excited bodies to potential future realities. In many ways, pipeline practices operated *within* the veterinary identity instead of *changing* the identity. In contrast, moves within the CVM to change ordinary practices such as time accommodations or curriculum were routinely met with inaction. Most importantly, actions around DEI were rooted in individualism. Attempts to move collectively failed to materialize and were at times limited because of the felt association with human animals.

Finally, the affective intensity of ordinary practices was consistently hidden. This hidden intensity was only revealed during attempts to challenge or change a practice. The underlying assumption was that practices were distinctly neutral. In this way, practices were not perceived as connected, but separate. Participants described how even minor changes to practices or objects, such as placing pronoun stickers on ID badges, carried affective resonance. The ordinariness and repetition of practices across space and time backgrounds affective intensity.

Communication and Connections

The final research question was concerned with the forming of connections and relations in and through practices. Research question three asked, "How do connections and relations materialize through communication?" First, communication appeared through language, but also as the transmission of intensity, feeling, and sensation. At the CVM, the atmosphere of whiteness demonstrated how white bodies were routinely connected through bodily encounter with other white bodies. Here, encountering bodies who "look like you" provides a sensory experience of comfort and belonging. Skin tone, hair style, dress, and the ease with which bodies move incites bodily excitation.

Participants described how proximal encounters with people who "look like them" were necessary to create a sense of belonging. In other words, connections materialized through the bodily arousal of proximal encounters. If communication is understood as the materialization of connections, then, affect helps connections stick. This framing of communication played out during an orientation presentation where my presence produced a connection between me and a student of color. More specifically, this proximal encounter illustrated how affective intensity and feeling transmit in and through bodies. Here, the student's shaking, rapid heartbeat, errant gestures, and intonation connected our bodies so that I felt what she felt.

Second, communication relied on the entanglement and circulation of sociomaterial elements. Connections communicatively materialized in many situations, but that materialization required an affective stickiness, a sensation that led to action. For example, in DEI committee meetings, an abundance of trajectories materialized but failed to stick. In the DEI meeting #1, the trajectories were about the award and pipeline

practices, whereas in the DEI meeting #2, the focus was on groups within the CVM. In both committee meetings, materialization happened because trajectories were not only articulated, but carried a felt association to the profession. However, these trajectories failed to stick and ultimately motivate action.

Beyond the research questions, several theoretical implications emerged from the study. First, I will explore the implications of this investigation for IDEA research. Next, I will discuss contributions for practice theory, communication, and affect theory. Third, I will address the practical implications for IDEA in veterinary medicine before finally explaining the strengths and limitations of the project and touching on directions for future research.

Implications for IDEA Research

Diversity is the social (dis)ordering of differences within work and organizations. Since the 1990s, IDEA have emerged as valuable commodities in organizational life (Villamil et al., 2022). Consistent with this transformation, diversity research has grown as an area of inquiry across fields like management, psychology, sociology, and communication, focusing on categories of difference, effectiveness of programs and policies, and values and strategies. Despite this focus, diversity theorizing has struggled to keep up with an ever-changing landscape marred by capitalist relations (Nkomo et al., 2019). While this project has several implications for diversity research, I have identified three primary areas that could benefit from the project's central findings. The first implication centers on the ontology of separation within diversity research and how understanding IDEA as organizational practice reinvigorates theorizing. The second implication focuses on occupational identity practices and the connection to occupational

segregation and the third on the importance of contextualization in understanding inequity in the workplace.

Ontology of Separation

Throughout this project, I have identified a recurring separation that undergirds diversity research and practice. Here, separation refers to individuation and distinction between entities. From this understanding entities are presumed to be fixed, determinate and to exist outside of relations. This separation ontology shapes reality and has led to persistent marginalization and inequity.

I argue that there is a consistent ontological separation between diversity related practices and ordinary practices. Prior to the completion of this study, the notion of separation as an ontological force was a theoretical endeavor rather than an empirical one. This study empirically illustrates how separation surfaces differently within context. In the context of veterinary medicine, diversity practices were largely separate from ordinary practices of work. Through a relational approach, I observed how veterinary medicine's occupational identity rests on the privileging of non-human animal health and welfare over human animals. As such, DEI was positioned as distinctly human and separate from the non-human animal focus of ordinary work practices. Here, practices such as time, body, mental health, or rest were routinely taken for granted and marginalized over non-human animal work (e.g., changing a catheter). Rather than challenging these entrenched, ordinary practices, DEI practices were limited to performative safe spaces such as student groups or recruiting pipelines targeted at POCs, but which operated within the existing systems of exclusivity. This study forwards the perspective that, as organizational practices, DEI practices should challenge, rethink, and

transform ordinary practices. At the CVM, DEI practices were rarely concerned with challenging, rethinking, or transforming ordinary practices. Diversity research should work to tease out the ontology of separation as a way of examining the persistence of inequity and exclusion within workplaces.

Occupational Identity and IDEA Research

Ashcraft (2013; 2011) forwards the *glass slipper model* as a means of understanding the relationship between occupational identity and occupational segregation. Occupational segregation explains how differences like race and gender are historically tied to the nature of work and the bodies that perform that work (Morgan & Knights, 1991). Occupational identity refers to the lines of work based on specific standards and practices. As Ashcraft (2013) observes, diversity management scholarship had not explored occupations and work as sites of discrimination.

The glass slipper metaphor, which combines glass ceiling understandings of inequity with the folk tale of Cinderella, demonstrates how the "alignment of occupational identity with embodied social identities" (Ashcraft, 2013, p. 16) disadvantages or advantages certain bodies over others. Ashcraft's initial theorizing offered six features. First, occupational identities appear naturalized through social construction. Second, work is associated with bodies that do the work, whereby men are engineers, accountants, and doctors, while women are nurses and social workers. Third, occupational identities are comprised of aspects that are not indicative of the actual work yet benefit certain bodies over others. Fourth, the glass slipper shows how the identity of work was not made for bodies perceived as different (race, gender, ability) and exposes the "synthetic privilege" of occupational fit. Fifth, privilege and discrimination of an

occupation rests on the type of bodies associated with said occupation. Finally, the glass slipper exposes how occupational identities are precarious and manufactured. The initial glass slipper metaphor suggested that work and bodies are mutually constituted through a struggle over meaning. However, more recent framings take a relational view and situate the glass slipper as a sociomaterial production with a particular focus on affect (i.e., Ashcraft, 2020).

The present study contributes to this line of research in two ways. First, this study demonstrates how exclusion manifests in and through occupational identity practices. The affective intensity of ordinary practices such as the human animal/non-human animal bond and the small animal template resonated as classed and deeply racialized. Here, exclusion surfaced within the jurisdiction claim over the nature of veterinary work as intensely focused on non-human animals, especially companion animals. Attempts to expand this identity challenged the occupational jurisdiction while providing inclusive constructions of veterinarians in medicine, public health, science, or research.

Second, research focused on occupational identity and diversity has focused primarily on the ways human bodies inhabit occupations through discourse (Zanoni & Janssens, 2015) or occupational campaign branding practices (McDonald & Kuhn, 2016). This study provides an empirical example of how mutual inhabitation, or work-body reciprocity, might instantiate inequity. Mutual inhabitation refers to the ways bodies and occupations mutually inhabit one another. In other words, bodies take up and "occupy" types of work, while occupations inhabit and affect the bodies that occupy it (Kuhn et al., 2017). Here, notions of self-sacrifice or resilience were intensely attached to the veterinary profession, such that work "affects the bodies in its path." For veterinarians,

working long hours or neglecting their own bodily necessities were pre-cognitive and deeply felt because they reinforced one's devotion the profession and to non-human animals. In this way, occupational inhabitation demonstrates how self-sacrifice occupies veterinarians and leaves marks on their bodies such as mental health or substance abuse issues.

Mutual inhabitation demonstrates how occupations can disproportionally affect bodies based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and ability, but also through their intersections. First, occupations not only exclude bodies based on these characteristics, but continuously socialize those bodies into the occupational identity. For instance, pipeline practices were cultivated to help racial and ethnically diverse bodies "fit" into the profession. As such, the glass slipper is not shattered and recreated, but bodies are essentially forced to fit these particular standards (Tyler, 2019). Thus, fitting diverse bodies into the profession without addressing the practices that exclude those bodies reinforces privilege and incites notions of imposter syndrome (Tomlinson et al., 2013). Specifically, self-reliant resilience demonstrated how one participant who was a student of color experienced and processed racism and microaggressions at the CVM by suppressing these experiences as a form of survival. Yet, as Ashcraft (2013) notes, occupational identities are fragile, and thus the student of color in the orientation example was able to diverge from this practice to address the dismissal of the black cultural center.

Context and the situatedness of DEI

Diversity researchers have long been concerned with establishing a best practice approach that is generalizable across contexts (Gherardi, 2019). However, Roberson (2019) argues for a greater focus on how context affects the ways practices are enacted

and carried out. First, the context of veterinary medicine is unique simply because of its explicit relationship with non-human animals. As such, a best practice approach to diversity in this context might have backgrounded this relationship. In fact, I observed how the CVM attempted to implement traditional diversity practices such as safe spaces, climate surveys, or recruitment of racial diversity with little success. As many of the participants suggested, diversity from this purview was seen as separate from their day-to-day work.

This study foregrounds context to tease out how exclusion surfaces in ordinary practice. I followed Janssens & Steyaert's (2020) flat ontological approach to reinscribe context as lively and active by centering on a myriad of practices and their interconnectedness. For instance, I identified how CVM practices of whiteness were informed by and bundled with veterinary identity practices of *calling*, which were then associated to the human animal/non-human animal connection. Finally, context showed how both the CVM and veterinary diversity practices primarily focused on socializing people of color to the profession in elementary, middle, and junior high school.

In short, this study contributed to IDEA research by first arguing for scholarship that attends to the ontology of separation entrenched in IDEA practices and research. Second, I examined how occupational identity informs the ways that occupations privilege certain bodies over others, based on manufactured features of work. Specifically, this study provides an empirical example of Ashcraft's (2013) glass slipper metaphor that foregrounds sociomateriality and affect. Finally, I demonstrated how context and situatedness of DEI offer nuance and consider the contextualization of social

order and inequity. In the next section I will address implications of this project for practice theory.

Implications for Practice Theory

Practice theory centers on the sociomaterial constitution of situated activity or connection in action. Recently, scholars have called for a practice approach to diversity to explicate how inequity forms in the logic of ordinary practice (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). This study answers Janssens & Steyaert's (2019) call to bring a practice lens to diversity research. In this section, I offer three implications of my findings for practice theory. First, I discuss how occupational practices produce social order and influence how DEI practices are enacted. Second, I illustrate how monolithic structures or systems such as whiteness emerge through practice. And finally, I offer a critique of the presumed neutrality of practices.

The social ordering of occupational identity

Practice researchers suggest that practices, especially organizational practices, produce certain kinds of social order (Nicolini, 2013; Gherardi, 2012). However, very little attention has been given to the role of occupational identity in producing social order (see Tomlinson et al., 2013). This study attends to the ways that occupational practices, much like organizational practices, produce and reproduce social order. In veterinary medicine, occupational practices produce social order by determining who is fit to enter the profession and through the attendant process of socialization. For example, as a practice, *callings* typically relied on a) exposure to non-human animals, or b) childhood exposure to veterinarians. Being called to the profession or to protect non-human animals sustained veterinarians' motivation to pursue the profession. Callings also

served to motivate students to strive for high academic excellence, balancing a number of extracurricular activities, and to accumulate hundreds of hours shadowing a practicing veterinarian. Most importantly, admission to vet school is incredibly difficult. This production of order led to students preparing for vet school as early as middle school. As previously mentioned, the social order relied on the connection between practices that transcend space and time. This study demonstrates how occupational practices were connected with the organizational practices of the CVM to form a constellation of practices that produce social order.

Entity level systems as ordinary practice

A practice approach works to shift the unit of analysis from the individual to the logic of practice. This shift is especially pertinent to entity-level systems like whiteness, heteronormativity, or neoliberalism. Janssens & Steyaert (2019) argue these entity systems seem to be "seen as stable features of an organizational order, transpiring amid and through practices and their associations" (p. 532). I argue that practicing whiteness as a monolithic structure reinforces its durability. Instead, research should examine how ordinary practices produce and reproduce whiteness. At the CVM, whiteness appeared as a constellation of practices, bodies, objects, and spaces. Whiteness, in this case, materialized as spatial privilege whereby white bodies consistently experienced bodily encounter with other white bodies. At the same time, whiteness was also observed in everyday practices like the articulation of resilience that privileged individualism and social comparison. Observing whiteness at the level of practice highlights how whiteness contextually surfaced in veterinary medicine. For instance, Arcinega (2021) examined whiteness of diversity professionals work through the logic of practice showed how

whiteness manifested white economics and white morality in the practices of diversity professionals.

Presumed neutrality of practice

The final implication for practice theory is an assumed neutrality of practices within work and organizations. The neutrality of practices elucidates how practices are rendered apolitical, separate, and affect neutral. First, the neutrality of practices presupposes that practices are not connected to other practices. This disentanglement of practices' connectedness limits our understanding of the privileges and inequities within structures and systems (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). For example, the affective economy of veterinary identity contributed to the production and reproduction of social order that favored white bodies over others. This social order emerged through the adherence to the human animal/non-human animal connection, self- sacrifice, and exclusive selection practices that were affectively connected to each other. The connectedness of practices demonstrates how practices are textured and bundled together to form structures (Hui et al., 2017). At the same time, this study showed how those practices also ordered how DEI practices (pipeline, mental health practices) were formed and enacted.

Second, according to Skonglund and Holt (2020) workplaces and their practices are stripped of their intensity to make life more neutral to "forestall lived eruptions" (p. 19). In other words, the ordinariness of practices supports predictability while attempts to change this ordinariness are viewed as disruptive. This study advances scholarly understanding of this phenomenon by examining how ordinary practices unfold as neutral, only to then surface as affectively charged and resonant in moments where practices are challenged. In particular, temporal practices within the profession and the

CVM were taken for granted and rendered affect neutral. When a student attempted to challenge these practices through accommodation, intensity surfaced and what could, in other contexts, be seen as a perfectly normal accommodation was framed as "extreme."

Reckwitz (2017) argues that a presumption of practices as rational and affect neutral stems from modernization. He suggests that practices carry built-in motivation and built-in affect that hinges on relations. In this study, assumed neutrality obscured relations enmeshed in practice. It was only when those practices received direct attention that a struggle ensued. Most importantly, understanding that practices are not affect neutral reinvigorates how practices are raced, classed, and gendered. For example, James (2021) exposes how the intensive pet parent practices assume neutrality but favor privileged, white individuals who are socialized around pets. James furthers that veterinarian's take for granted intensive pet parent practices when interacting with clients and potential students. Recognition of the intensive pet parent as a historically racialized practice is therefore neglected.

Professionalization and Professionalism

Alongside the occupational literature, this study contributes to the professionalism literature in two ways. First, this study follows the professionalism literature in suggesting that professions transcend organizational identity. The CVM was deeply entangled with veterinary professionals' associations in ways that determined practices and identification. From accreditation organizations and national student associations to specialist organizations, knowledge was affectively circulated through ongoing bodily encounter. This was particularly evident in the notion of pipeline practices where many of the ideas about how to increase diversity emerged from other CVM initiatives or from

professional associations. This extends Lammers and Garcia's (2009) notion of professing that refers to "seeking, giving, and sharing knowledge in a way that is determined in large part by membership in a collectivity that transcends organizations' boundaries" (p. 380). This study demonstrates how the sharing of knowledge surfaces in the doing of knowledge and the sense-able connections between "persons and collectives that pick up steam as they travel" (Ashcraft, 2020, p. 12).

Second, Ferguson and Dougherty (2022) explore how black professionals are expected to engage in practices of whiteness in order to demonstrate their affective value to organization and workplace settings. This performative practice of professionalism produces textured and nested paradoxes for black bodies that are irrational and deeply felt. This study extends this literature by acknowledging how bodily encounter with other black bodies can create new possibilities and trajectories for action and resistance. Students of color at the CVM were expected to embody a self-reliant resilience that negated efforts for collectivity and minimized their racial and ethnic differences. However, practices of whiteness were challenged and transformed when race and ethnic difference was relationally foregrounded.

In short, this study contributed to practice theory by illustrating how affective economy of occupational practices produces social order. Second, this study exposes how entity level systems such as whiteness are rooted in practices. Finally, presumed neutrality of practices demonstrates how practices are not neutrally positioned but connected with other practices and how affective intensity and feeling, and most importantly, privilege are embedded in ordinary practices.

Implication for Affect Theory and IDEA

The literature on affect is vast but has only recently gained traction in work and organizing (Gherardi, 2016). Affect has seen a gradual uptake in diversity research (Fotaki & Pullen, 2019). Rather than addressing the affect literature in isolation, I discuss implications of affect alongside diversity research. First, I examine how whiteness is affectively constituted. Second, I address affective tension within belonging and inclusion. Third, I demonstrate how (dis) ordered affective attunement contributes to the affect literature.

Affective Constitution of Whiteness

The construct *whiteness* lacks an agreed upon definition, but typically denotes a type of privilege that is based on invisible cultural norms (Grimes, 2002). Whiteness remains an underexplored concept in organizational diversity literature (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). This study challenges the muscularity or dominance of whiteness through the logic of practice and affective intensity. Descriptions of whiteness tend to emphasize its invisible norms (Al Ariss et al., 2014), its connections to rationality and individualism (Arcinega, 2021), and its relation to systems of white supremacy (Liu, 2017).

In much of this literature, whiteness is situated as passive and abstract. Here I frame whiteness as a lively and enduring affective privilege granting practice. In other words, what feels true, rather than what makes sense becomes the basis of argumentation. At the CVM, an atmosphere of whiteness circulated based on intensity and feeling, instead of logic. What felt right at the CVM was an expectation that one must struggle in order to be resilient. For white bodies, the notion of self-reliance resilience *felt* true

because it is what helped them get into and survive vet school. More specifically, shirking off microaggressions, pushing through mental trauma, or seeing a classmate die were entangled with the feeling that vet school is difficult. In this way, affect is a-rational and requires adherence through the intensity of circulation.

Additionally, Liu (2017) contends that increasing diversity provides affective value for white bodies and organizations because it supports feelings of goodness that hide the historical exclusion of POC's, and promote a happy inclusive organization (Ahmed, 2017). This study contributes to this literature in two ways. First, increasing diversity through pipeline practices served to excite white bodies, while also sustaining the deeply felt connection with the occupational practices of veterinary medicine. Second, this study illustrates how the inclusion of more POC can simultaneously provide affective value to white bodies and ignite bodily excitation for POCs who reside in those spaces. In fact, at the CVM, participants were attuned to the way that bodily encounters with other POCs offered a sensory experience. At the same time, including POCs also brought affective value through visibility in photos or videos.

Affective push for true belonging and inclusion

While diversity has a longstanding place in organizational communication literature, inclusion and belonging research have garnered considerable attention in recent years. Inclusion operates as recognition of the self and the other (Introna, 2013). More specifically, inclusion signifies belonging whereby individuals can bring their authentic selves to the workplace. Here, inclusion is positioned affectively through a sensation of belonging and recognition. At the CVM, there was an overwhelming push to be as "inclusive" as possible so that all bodies were valued. This push for inclusion largely

manifested as “seeing bodies that look like you,” introducing children of color to the profession, and refraining from actions that might risk exclusion.

Participants were afraid to make a mistake or exclude bodies so much that it precluded them from considering certain diversity practices at all. For example, the CVM failed to create a calendar for cultural holidays because there was fear of leaving some groups and cultures out. For this reason, affective precarity of inclusion closes off possibilities such that inclusion became idealized and conditional. In other words, inclusion looks like this and not that. However, Tyler and Vachhani (2021) argue that the affective promise of true inclusion marginalizes relationality by negating the possibility of exclusion and reifies difference. Furthermore, Ashcraft et al (2012) argue the felt tension between exclusivity and inclusivity allows for the simultaneous exploration of historical formations of exclusion in occupational and organizational contexts and the contemporary pursuit of workplace inclusion. Specifically, exploring the history of occupational or organizational exclusions is necessary to understand how inclusion becomes contextually possible. This study demonstrates how “true inclusion” is a promise that will never materialize because senses of belonging or inclusion are precarious and ultimately negate the possibility of exclusion.

Affective (Dis)ordering of Difference

Researchers argue that difference is relationally constituted rather than situated in essentialized categorical attributes designated as marginalized (Ahmed, 2012; Tyler, 2019). Instead, difference reveals how relations between the self and other become (dis)ordered through bifurcation or separation, such that the other is marginalized and misrecognized. In this study, difference was affectively (dis)ordered and produced

through bodily encounter. For instance, difference emerged in the separation between non-human animals and human animals whereby human animal bodies and their concerns were frequently marginalized. Participants often talked about feeling a stronger sensory connection to non-human animals. As such, affective intensity served to (dis)order how bodies move, act, and feel. Difference was (dis)ordered during a student's reported encounter that forced them to choose between changing a dog's catheter or taking time to eat lunch. Attempts to choose otherwise would be disruptive to and challenge the affective adherence to helping non-human animals. Moreover, those who do not adhere to this pattern of self-sacrifice and who consider human concerns are othered.

This formulation of difference is better understood through Ashcraft's (2019) work on hoarding where the DSM-5 designation of Hoarding Disorder (HD) and popular media depictions, such as the television series *Hoarders*, position hoarders as deviant bodies that distort and perverse our everyday capitalist relationship with things. Thus, hoarding is sociomaterially situated as the messy "other" transposed against the foundation of orderly practice. Here, orderly practice holds affective value by "controlling relations of difference and keeping "them" in place" (Ashcraft, 2019, p.106). In veterinary medicine, the elevation and adherence to non-human animals holds affective value for a multitude of reasons including strengthening the human animal/non-human animal bond. For this reason, orderly practice of self-sacrifice to non-human animals is entangled with human animals' obsession with pets. Veterinary practices rely on human animals' willingness to spend money to take care for their non-human animals.

Yet, as James (2021) describes this sacrificial devotion it is a classed and racialized practice that excludes POC who fail to adhere to this norm of possession.

(Dis) ordered Affective Attunement

Much of the research refers to (dis)order as a simultaneous opening and closing of meaning (Vásquez et al., 2016; for exceptions see Ashcraft, 2019). This study extends the literature by acknowledging the sociomaterial constitution of (dis)order and its foundation in practice. Specifically, I propose (dis)ordered attunement as the simultaneous opening and closing of trajectories, movement, and actions that capture our attention. In this way, (dis)ordered attunement configures what comes to matter in a given situation and how that mattering produces newness and possibility. Most importantly, (dis)ordered attunement relies on the transpersonal circulation of affect to compel bodies into action. While attunement is often described as a shared experience (Katila et al., 2020), this study shows how affect disrupts normatively attuned conditions that dictate our actions and bodies. For example, a student of color explained how she frequently engaged in the practice of "minimizing signs difference" by dismissing and suppressing microaggressions. This practice of attuning to whiteness is similar to Ahmed's (2017) notion of *institutional passing* where POCs refrain from disrupting the atmosphere and instead show a willingness to "ease the burden of your own difference. The killjoy too appears here as the one that we must give up" (p. 131). During the presentation, however, the affective energy that connected the student to me shows how action in the immediacy can produce connection and trajectories that might normally feel closed. The student's decision to speak with an administrator not only demonstrates how

agency arises through the distribution of actors but also that affect can be a disruptive reconfiguring force that creates new trajectories and possibilities for the other.

In summary, this study contributes to the affect and diversity literature by demonstrating how whiteness and other entity-level systems are lively, feeling, and stoke bodily excitation. Second, pushes for true inclusion often ignore the precarity of sensations of belonging, while also rendering historical formations of exclusion as abject. Instead, this study attends to inclusion and exclusion as relational practices.

Implications for Communication theory

In this study, I explored how communication is the materializing of connections and relations in practice. Communication connects practices, bodies, objects, spaces, and symbols. I observed how communication holds an affective constitution in two ways. First, communication is transmitted affectively through bodily encounter. Specifically, signals of intensity and feeling such as bodily movement, heavy breathing, facial expressions, and tone connected bodies, practices, and spaces. For example, the student of color's bodily excitation in response to a presenter skipping the black cultural center during a presentation flowed through me such that we shared a collective, affective experience, placing us in relation to the material and constructive elements of the space.

Second, the circulation of signs, symbols, objects, and bodies within the veterinary medicine identity created an affective economy of practices. Here, communication denotes the circulation produced through repeated connections. At the same time, communication relied on affect to facilitate connections and associations between callings, resilience, self-sacrifices, and human animal/non-human animal bonds, which stick together to form an occupational identity. This study answers Ashcraft's

(2021) call to rethink communication as constitutive of affective transmission through empirical investigation. This project examines communication as constitutive of affective transmission or, as Ashcraft (2021) understands it, "the circulation of sense by which bodies come into contact, affect one another, and jointly become" (p. 585). Ashcraft furthers that sense is both made and shared through energies, sensation, intensity, attention, mood, logic, and the like. Furthermore, Ashcraft draws on Brennan's (2004) notion of affective transmission as rooted in communication. However, communication is rarely associated with transmission but provides a necessary connection to the ways that bodies, objects, spaces, and atmospheres resonate and transfer.

Finally, along these lines, communication as transmission illustrates connection. Connections, and their ability to stick and reinvigorate power. Power emerges as the power to connect and disconnect, but also to stick. At the CVM, inaction became a powerful way to protect oneself from the consequences of changing practices (e.g., pronouns on ID badges). Mease (2021) supports this claim by describing how affective forces configure and reconfigure connections through communicative practice.

Implications for diversity practice and veterinary medicine

This dissertation offers practical knowledge for DEI work and the field of veterinary medicine. There are three primary implications for practice. Broadly speaking, these implications affect how organizations and occupations navigate and maintain practices within their purview. In other words, organizations should understand that DEI practices are constantly changing, and the context is necessary for explicating these changes. First, I address implications for diversity practice. Second, I explore implications for veterinary medicine

Implications for DEI practice

First, the ontology of separation within DEI research also surfaces in practice. Organizations and occupations should attend to how an ontology of separation affects both ordinary practices and diversity practices. While organizations are not in the business of thinking about ontology, acknowledging how organizations and occupations separate DEI from ordinary practices and neutralized the affective intensity of ordinary practices and historical exclusion challenges the diversity as additive approach. Here, diversity operates independently of everyday work, much like human resources. Yet, the persistence of this separation allows inequity and inequality to reside in ordinary practices. Instead, thinking relationally positions diversity as an organizational practice that transforms ordinary practices.

Second, historical framings of diversity have neglected notions of wellbeing and mental health. This project demonstrated how wellbeing affects all bodies, albeit in diverse ways. For example, students of color experience inequitable practices surrounding mental health, yet are disproportionately affected, which exacerbates mental health issues. Furthermore, during the VSO presentation on mental health, notions of gender identity, sexual assault, or sexual orientation were listed while other aspects, particularly racial trauma or discrimination, remained absent. Kiles et al (2021) found that racial trauma induced psychological distress in pharmacy students of color. Thus, attending to and working through these issues is necessary. Furthermore, Winters (2020) explains that practitioners should be concerned with both individual and organizational wellbeing. To this end, she furthers that addressing how practices are raced, gendered, and classed is fundamentally tied to wellbeing.

Implications for veterinary medicine

While there are several implications for veterinary medicine, I explore two primary implications. First, veterinarians' occupational identity challenges anthropocentrism by elevating concerns about animal wellness. Perhaps due to entrenched understandings of human/animal divisions this process of elevation led to a persistent marginalization of human animal practices. Instead, I argue that veterinary medicine should hold human animals and non-human animals together to produce a relational "third." The intra-action of both human animals and non-human animals should be a core facet of the occupational identity. Specifically, veterinary curriculum should investigate both how to palpate a cow or flush a catheter as well as the history of the profession and the unique relationship between human animals and non-human animals. In working through history, veterinarians can explore the racialized and gendered history of the profession. For example, how, beyond anti-discrimination legislation, the profession shifted from being white male-dominated to being white female-dominated. Additionally, James (2021) contends attending to land-grant initiatives and connecting with diverse communities could be highly beneficial for desires to increase racial and ethnic diversity. Finally, by associating the profession with both non-human animals and human animals, veterinarians can attend to the marginalizing effects on human animals. For example, veterinarians can examine how their practices create mental issues rather than creating practices—like an embedded psychologist— that sustain mental health inequities (Hancock, 2018). Specifically, Clarke & Knights (2019) have also documented how self-sacrificing practices result in persistent neglect of human animal bodies.

Limitations, strengths, and future directions

This dissertation has limitations that affected the analysis as well as implications for future research. The first limitation is concerned with study design. Although I examined three areas within a college of veterinary medicine, the study still took place within a single context. This affected how I understood the weight of the occupation on organizational practices. Other veterinary schools have distinct cultures and enact occupational practices differently. Some schools have more racial diversity and/or more resources devoted to IDEA. Future research should consider observation of additional vet schools and vet hospitals. In addition, more attention should be devoted to examining archival documents. Additional archival investigation would have been logistically difficult in this context because of the robustness of the study, but future researchers should strive to understand the role of texts in fostering occupational and organizational identity and practice. Along those same lines, my study design proposed postponing interviews until after considerable observation. However, this decision may have limited my understanding of occupational identity and affected the number of interviews conducted. Future investigations should more seamlessly blend observation and interviews.

The second major limitation concerned the robustness of the project. Specifically, the scope prevented me from focusing on some of the more nuanced aspects of practices, such as the bundling of practices across space and time, or how DEI practices function over time. Finally, this study only briefly attended to the gender dynamics that were clearly present within the CVM. While these dynamics are entangled with and

increasingly difficult to tease from the notions of race and class, more work should be done to examine the unique role of gender in this space.

In contrast, one strength of this dissertation was its theoretical foundations. Working with affect theory, practice theory, and communicative relationality allowed my project to unfold into a myriad of directions. Using metatheories offered room for zooming in and out to explore a number of potential trajectories. Admittedly, there were times where these potentialities were overwhelming. Still, given the scope, this focus on metatheory provided much-needed breathing room to explore the intricacies of the CVM. The final strength was that my study focused on both ordinary practices and DEI practices. This allowed me to observe their relations and sociomaterial constitution. Subsequently, I was able to tease out the connection between them that helped produce and reproduce social order.

As previously mentioned, this study offered boundless opportunities for future research. I have homed in on three areas that provide the most promise. First, in the future, I am interested in exploring the relationship between veterinarians and non-human animals. I am particularly concerned with how this relationship connects to inclusion. While veterinarians attempt to challenge anthropocentrism, non-human animals were positioned as helpless and innocent. This seemed to explain why non-human animals were elevated over human animals. Elevating non-human animals as helpless beings reinvigorates notions of humans as saviors. Furthermore, this framing extended to people of color, especially children in pipeline practices. In other words, veterinarians enact a white savior complex such that POC are implicitly rendered helpless, like non-human

animals. Future research should examine the connection between saving animals and saving POC and the effects of this ideology on agency and inclusion.

Next, in the future, a more nuanced visual network analysis that further attends to affect has exciting potential. Specifically, I want to explore how connections materialize between ordinary practices *and* DEI practices and helps visualize constellations of practices. Because of time and scope, I was unable to explore a 5th theme centered on the forming of novel connections. In fact, I observed several instances where novel connections emerged but were seemingly disconnected from bodies and practices for a variety of reasons including preservation of the practice.

Finally, I propose further exploring practices of *calling* and *resilience* as affective forms of whiteness and social ordering within DEI research. I found calling to be particularly interesting, especially as it pertains to POCs (Sanchez-Sanchez, 2021) and their affective connections to various types of work and occupations. In addition, future work should investigate resilience practices that center endurance and adaptation within the individual. Questions such as occupational and organizational resilience offer novel starting points.

Concluding Thoughts

In this study, I have sought to analyze ordinary and DEI practices within a college of veterinary medicine. Drawing on relational theories of practice, communication, and affect, my findings revealed how ordinary occupational and organizing practices of the CVM simultaneously produce inequity and exclusion while (dis)ordering DEI practices. This (dis)ordering rests on a precarious texture of sociomaterial accomplishments configured through intensity, feeling, and sensation. As

this study has shown, DEI in workplaces remains at a critical juncture. Nkomo (2020) argued that we have to better position ourselves to think differently, intentionally, and contextually about DEI if we are to adequately address the persistence of inequity in work and organizing. This study moves DEI research in this direction, creating a better understanding of how inequality in work and organizing continues across time.

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APPENDIX A: OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL

Table 1. Instance of a witnessing protocol for collecting and coding relational data

Activity	Actors	Relations/Connection	Contextual Information
Short description of activity witnessed	*Extensive overview of all active actors in the activity witnessed*	*Extensive overview of all (forms of) Relations*	*Additional contextual information in order to facilitate interpretation*

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

General Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your role in the CVM
2. Tell me about the culture of the CVM
3. How does the CVM's culture relate to veterinary identity?
4. Tell me about the desire for DEI in the CVM.
5. How does DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) affect the culture of the CVM?
6. Describe how equity and inclusion is expressed in the day-to-day practices.
7. Describe your feelings or emotions about DEI related practices at the CVM.
8. If you wanted to change an common practice at the CVM, how would you do it?
9. Describe the difficulties of the developing new CVM practices.
10. How do DEI related practices influence everyday practices in the CVM?

Prompt

I've learned so much about your role as _____, but I want to understand that process even better. I want to imagine what it would be like step into your role myself. Pretend that we are in a comic book. Imagine me as your clone and that <u>tomorrow morning</u> I will go to work in your place. How should I act? What should I think about? How should I feel? What should I do so that no one discovers the switch?

So for example, if you were to do my job and teach for me tomorrow. I would say this….

> Tomorrow you'll go to campus between 845-915. You hope to leave earlier so that you can prep for class, but instead you always cut it short. As much as I want to get up early, I don't which often puts you behind. When you get to campus, you park in either street parking or behind your building. When you get into your office, you walk pass students, some of which are your own. As you drop off your things, you always notice that your office needs cleaning. You will then grab the course textbook, your computer and anything else you need for class. Because your class is on the third floor, you decide to take the elevator instead of the stairs. Sometimes you see other faculty members as you walk through the halls. You want to stop and chat, but because you're running late, you don't. This is because you know you will be exhausted when you get there. While the elevator is slower, it saves you from having to catch your breath in front of your students. On the elevator, there are usually a one or two students with you. When you get to the 3rd floor, you walk into class around 9:30. You always say hello to your students. It is a 50/50 chance that they will say hello back to you. Depending on the day, you are annoyed by this. You then log into your computer, and scramble to think about what you want to do today for class…

VITA

Scott Edward Branton II was born in Jacksonville, Florida in February 1985 to Sharron Denise Andrews and Scott Edward Branton. After his father's death in 1986, he, his mother, and stepfather relocated to New Castle, Delaware. As an energetic child, he spent most of his time playing sports and terrorizing his younger siblings. He attended Christ Our King Catholic School until the 5th grade when he transferred to St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School in New Castle. He attended St. Elizabeth's High School where he was an average student. He very briefly attended Florida A&M University before transferring to dual enroll at Florida Community College of Jacksonville and the University of North Florida. At FCC-Jacksonville, Scott took a speech class from Professor Carol H. Grimes who strongly encouraged him to join the forensics team. His competitive spirit was forged in this activity, where he went on to win several state championships and was a national finalist in Persuasive Speaking. He eventually transferred to his dream school Florida State University where he joined the FSU Speech Team and enrolled as a social work major. Before completing his degree, he dropped out of FSU and spent four years coaching the FSU speech team and working odd jobs around Tallahassee. In 2012 he re-enrolled at FSU and earned a Bachelor of Social Work. He then gained acceptance into the graduate program and earned a Master of Social Work from Florida State. At the same time, he worked with foster youth as a case manager in child welfare. In 2013 he took a job working for the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, the research arm of the Florida Legislature. During this time, he moonlighted as a speech coach for the Florida State University forensics team. He then took a graduate assistantship working with the speech team and Department of Communication at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky. While he

briefly wanted to be a Director of Forensics, his master's advisor Dr. Holly Payne convinced him to pursue a PhD in Communication. His master's thesis is where he first explored questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in organizations. He then enrolled in the PhD program in the Department of Communication at the University of Missouri. He was a Gus T. Ridgel Fellow, a Graduate Scholar of Excellence, and President of the Association of Communication Graduate Students. Following the completion of his degree, Scott will be an Assistant Professor in the School of Communication and Journalism at Auburn University. He has two dogs, JJ and Issa.