ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	FACILITATING EXPRESSED EMPATHY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS
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Empathy, it seems, is having a moment. However—even as empathy's conceptual popularity is on the rise—displays of empathy are on the decline, reflecting polarization trends in the United States. This project seeks to cultivate a culture of empathy in a time when we are particularly hopeless about the future of public conversations and democracy. I forward empathy as a practice for elevating deliberative and dialogic discourses by helping participants more fully consider other perspectives, asking: *what deliberative and dialogic practices facilitate empathy?* To answer this question, I articulate a rhetorical definition of empathy. Individuals practice what I term *expressed empathy* when they 1) express shared emotions with the other, 2) use language that acknowledges and imagines the other's experience, and 3) articulate a recognition of difference between self and other. I analyze three distinct public conversations to answer this project's central question, responding to calls for research on actual examples of deliberation and dialogue.

In the first chapter, I analyze audio tapes from four 1968 Citizens Interracial Committee community dialogues on education in San Diego public schools. I identify two distinct types of expressed empathy based on CIC participants' communication, which I term second- and third-person expressed empathy. In the second chapter, I examine 75 transcripts of community conversations hosted by the Local Voices Network and New York Public Library from February 2019 to March 2020. These conversations illustrate the value of expressed empathy centered around similar experiences, as they also prompt questions about the degree of difference necessary for expressed empathy to meaningfully enhance the epistemic goals of dialogue. In the third chapter, I review videos from a 90-minute virtual dialogue I hosted in collaboration with the Dayton International Peace Museum during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This case explores participant use of narrative kernels as resources for expressing empathy based on similar experiences, along with the kernels' conforming influence. Taken together these cases represent a range of rhetorical practices along the deliberation-dialogue spectrum. From these cases, I articulate lessons learned about conversation formats, facilitation strategies, and communication practices for cultivating second-person expressed empathy in dialogue and deliberation settings.

FACILITATING EXPRESSED EMPATHY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

by

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Introduction

A former bully rethinks his behavior and donates new clothes to the classmate picked on for wearing the same thing every day—going viral with thousands of views on social media and capturing the attention of celebrities like Ellen Degeneres and Will Smith.[1] The Netflix series reboot *Queer Eye: More Than a Makeover* with its message of "break down walls not build them" is a tremendous hit, racking up awards, top ratings, and a combined 18 million Instagram followers for the Fab Five.[2] The legendary model of kindness, Mr. Rogers, broke box office records with the top-grossing biographical documentary of all time.[3]

Empathy, it seems, is having a moment. Headlines from countries around the globe spotlight empathy. From the United States ("Why the World Needs an Empathy Revolution"[4]) to China ("Empathy: Why We Need More of it in a Polarised World"[5]), empathy is what "we need."[6] Public figures Pharrell Williams, Robin Arzón, Roxane Gay, Walter Mosley, Robert Reffkin, Gloria Steinem, and Cornel West have joined together to host a MasterClass course on the "Power of Empathy." In the promotional video, Williams boldly declared: "empathy's greatest potential is equality for all mankind."[7] The Wall Street Journal dubbed "empathy ads" the "new breed" of political advertisements.[8] The Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education challenged students to create empathy building activities for teachers and an educational project called Roots of Empathy is working in schools in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Netherlands, Costa Rica, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.[9] Google named empathy as one of its "seven top characteristics of [employee] success" and articles on sites such as Indeed and Inc. offer reasons why empathy is the most important skill needed in the workforce.[10] Google search results of "empathy" skyrocketed in the

decade between 2005 and 2015 and academic articles referring to the word "empathy" in 2016 tripled the number of publications between 1900 and 1970.[11]

At the same time that we collectively revel in the prospects for empathy, there is much hand wringing over the prospects for democratic politics. *CNN* published a series titled "Welcome to the Fractured States of America; "[12] *Foreign Affairs* proclaimed "in the United States, polarization runs particularly deep;"[13] and *PRI* mused "America's polarized politics may be here to stay."[14] Headlines depict our democracy as deeply threatened by division: "Polarization is poisoning America;"[15] "Americans Hate One Another;"[16] and "Republicans And Democrats Don't Agree, Or Like Each Other – And It's Worse Than Ever."[17] Journalists worry about the future of a nation divided by polarization and mutual distrust of the opposing political party declaring: "the body politic is more fractious than at any time in recent memory"[18] and that "people talk longingly about restoring civility or returning to an earlier time. Little suggests that could happen soon."[19] Polarization grew even more stark during the Trump era. In the year following Trump's inauguration, 75 percent of Republicans viewed Democrats negatively and 70 percent of Democrats reported negative views of Republicans – an increase of approximately 30 percent from the previous year and a 50 percent increase from the mid-1990s.[20] Congress, the nation's primary deliberative body, earns abysmal approval ratings. The last decade marks the longest stretch that congressional approval ratings remained below 30 percent since Gallup began polling in 1974.[21] And scholars point out that public deliberation suffers from self-interested rhetoric in deliberative exchanges.[22] Clearly, as a society, we are pessimistic about the health of our democracy.

Even as empathy's conceptual popularity is on the rise, displays of empathy are on the decline, reflecting the trends in polarization bemoaned by journalists and citizens alike. Twenty-

first century college students exhibited a decline in empathy compared to college students in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[23] As researchers leading the study of thousands of college students noted, the significant decline in dispositional empathy in American college students, is "troubling."[24] They suggested that this marked decline in empathy "opens the door for research on the causes and consequences of living in a potentially less empathetic society."[25] While their reflection seeks to understand reality, it also begs the question, "how do we create a more empathetic society?" In light of the apparent decline in empathy, it seems one necessary answer is not simply to study its consequences, but to make sense of how to fix the problem.

My purpose in this project then is to contribute to scholarship seeking to cultivate a culture of empathy in a time when we are particularly hopeless about the future of democracy and public conversations. This project considers how empathy might elevate dialogic and deliberative discourse, asking, *what deliberative and dialogic practices facilitate empathy?* Public deliberation is consistently seen as the solution to values that undermine democracy: self-interestedness, fragmentation, stratification.[26] It gives individuals a chance to come to solutions they may not have considered.[27] Comparatively, "facilitated public dialogue" can transform conversations about social issues. Both deliberation and dialogue lead to new ways of contemplating and articulating public problems through the interaction of diverse perspectives.[28] Deliberation and public dialogue are essential for a thriving democracy, and empathy seemingly plays a role in the health of these modes of discourse. Cultivating empathy in these spaces may improve the quality of the communication in deliberative and dialogic exchanges and resuscitate moribund habits of democratic citizenship.

In what follows, I begin by outlining the role public conversations play in a healthy democracy. I draw distinctions between deliberation and dialogue, defining each term using

existing literature. Next, I articulate common problems with deliberation and dialogue in practice and posit practices of empathy as a solution to these problems. I craft a rhetorical definition of empathy—that I term expressed empathy—to serve as the central framework for the project. I then address how expressed empathy accounts for challenges to empathy. Finally, I describe my approach to analyzing public conversation discourses and briefly outline the cases in this dissertation.

The Role of Public Conversations in Democracy

Deliberative democracy is a model of democracy that prioritizes citizens coming together to discuss issues, plans, values, and objectives. Deliberation and dialogue are processes for collaboratively sharing perspectives and solving problems in a democracy. Public conversations provide participants with a chance to discuss, better understand, and offer solutions to community problems.[29] As Iris Marion Young explains, "in a communicative democracy participants in discussion aim at reaching understandings about solutions to their collective problems."[30] The process of sharing arguments results in collaborative decision-making.[31] According to Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen, the goal of deliberative democracy is to explore "ways of bettering civic life."[32] Theories of deliberative democracy point to the possibility for robust transformation public conversations can provide.[33] Deliberative theorists agree that democracy requires a reason-giving forum in order for decisions to be legitimate and consider deliberation to be the principal decision-making process in a healthy democracy.[34] Thus, deliberation is essential for democracy and deliberative practices are a fundamental form of democratic activity.[35]

Public deliberation and dialogue offer participants a process for sharing their beliefs—and the basis of those beliefs—on controversial issues facing our democracy. Public

conversation maintains the "self-regulating system" of democracy as values are articulated and contested in public discourse.[36] For example, through what Alexander Livingston calls "deliberative redescription," conversation participants problematize previously accepted discursive practices (by calling out the oppressiveness of these practices) and offer new ideas that have the potential to become the new normal in the public sphere.[37] Thomas Goodnight writes: "deliberative rhetoric is a form of argumentation through which citizens test and create social knowledge in order to uncover, assess, and resolve shared problems."[38] This process of exchanging reasons can inspire self-reflection, incentivize better justifications, and improve the quality of our conclusions.[39] Through public conversation, opposing groups can find points of commonality and acceptable solutions, which according to James McDonald, is the "chief aims of rhetorical democracy."[40] As Gerard Hauser writes: "Public opinion requires public dialogue. An exchange of views is essential to arriving at a balanced judgment on competing interests."[41] Deliberation and public dialogue generate decisions that account for the needs of the people.[42]

Deliberation can lead to better and more democratically legitimate solutions. Stithorn Thananithichot and Wichuda Satidporn articulate the importance of deliberation in democratic decision-making:

> A commitment to deliberation is, after all, a commitment to finding a way to address concerns, resolve disagreements, and overcome conflicts by offering arguments to our fellow citizens that are supported by reasons. In theory, the main benefits of democratic deliberation are: to promote the legitimacy of collective decisions; to encourage public-spirited perspectives on public issues; to promote mutually respectful decision making; and to enhance democracy.[43]

Public conversation can help individuals understand problems outside their familial or individual concerns, leading them to more equitable decisions that benefit wider publics and bring people together.[44] For this reason, scholars generally agree that public deliberation and discursive

participation in public life should be more widely promoted in our contemporary democracy.[45] According to Jane Mansbridge, "all real democracies" have inequality. However, when democracies "multiply the available deliberative arenas," power can be critiqued and challenged.[46] Public conversation on social and political issues allows both experts and citizens to participate rhetorically and come to solutions they may not have considered if they had not interacted with others.[47]

Deliberation and public dialogue are constitutive practices in democratic society; they create discursive publics.[48] Through public conversation, citizens learn about and discuss social issues. Accordingly, civic change is enacted through discursive action in communities.[49] Deliberation is "a distinctly rhetorical process" that shapes the material world of civil society. Troy Murphy explains: "the discourses that operate in specific contexts effectively define social and political realities, normalize understandings of democratic citizenship, and elevate specific issues into exigent concerns."[50] The discourses that circulate in and come out of deliberative exchanges have the power to shape our attention and set the social and political agendas of a community.[51] Scholars have termed this participation "rhetorical citizenship," which conceptualizes public conversation as a practice for meaningfully engaging in society.[52] The concept of rhetorical citizenship constitutes citizenship broadly; it is not bound by state-dictated parameters. Ideally, all people in a community are able to participate discursively.[53]

Public dialogue plays a distinct role in democracy by providing alternative modes of rhetorical participation in democratic life. Laura Black and Anna Wiederhold explain how public dialogue has been embraced by communities "in response to frustrations with the design and implementation of more traditional public meetings."[54] Public dialogue is a civic engagement strategy that enables dialogic communication among participants.[55] Public dialogue offers a

process for communicating about and across differences that can play an essential role in social and civic life and "meet [the] challenges of globalism, cultural diversity, and political controversy."[56] As Rob Anderson, Kenneth N. Cissna, and Meghan K. Clune describe, public dialogue "is increasingly being conceived as a necessity for citizen involvement, democratic participation, and cultural understanding…[and a] realistic alternative to alienation or acquiescence."[57] Practitioners of public dialogue often work in communities with groups and participants holding radically different opinions.[58] A dialogic communication process can help individuals and groups understand and transcend differences that could make traditional deliberative processes unproductive. Through the better understanding gained from dialoguing, participants may be more likely to find a path forward in deliberation in spite of their differences. Therefore, dialogue can play a role in public deliberation, elevating the quality of decisions in deliberation settings.[59]

Defining Deliberation and Dialogue

In this next section, I outline the basic distinctions drawn between deliberation and dialogue in the literature and consider the ways that these two types of public conversation overlap. Deliberation serves a decision-making function. Participants consider different perspectives on an issue to find the best path for moving forward. Dialogue, on the other hand, centers on experience-sharing with a small group of people. While action may result from dialogue, its focus is on understanding and perspective-taking.[60] Peter Levine, John Gastil, and Archon Fung "make a clear and useful distinction" between deliberation and dialogue: "deliberation focuses on policy choices, dialogue seeks accommodation, reconciliation, mutual understanding, or at the very least, informed tolerance."[61] In short, deliberation is focused on decision-making, whereas dialogue serves an epistemic function. The Latin roots of deliberation

and dialogue also demonstrate their distinct purposes. Deliberation is divided into *de* and *librare*, which mean “entirely” and “to balance,” respectively. Together, they signify “weigh, consider well.” Dialogue, which comes from *dia* and *logos*, connects “through” and “reason” to be understood as the “flow of meaning.”[62] These meanings align with the responsibilities of deliberation and dialogue participants.

Deliberation is outcome-oriented. It is, as Levine, Fung, and Gastil describe, “a problem-solving form of discourse.” Typically, deliberative processes include a series of conversations that consider the merit of various solutions to public problems. Deliberative participants analyze these problems, establish the group’s priorities, determine how they will evaluate potential solutions, and come up with and assess different solutions. Ideally, deliberation is a “respectful, egalitarian, and conscientious process”[63] that results in judicious decisions made after “a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view.”[64] While deliberative groups seek consensus, they may make decisions through majority rule when necessary.[65]

This project is informed by broad conceptions of what counts as deliberation. I follow Christopher K. Karpowitz and Chad Raphael to include “forums that can influence politics indirectly through many of the complex ways in which public opinion functions in a democracy.”[66] This definition accounts for discursive processes in communities that fall outside traditional sites of democratic deliberation. I am particularly interested in what Edana Beauvais and Andre Baechtiger identify as “civic forums,” which are sites of deliberation that can be changed by participants and facilitators, rather than by the legal measures as required in more formal modes of deliberation.[67] These definitions account for a range of deliberative spaces, embracing the different ways in which social and political change can happen and emphasizing the power of discourse to constitute those changes.

A broader definition of deliberation may also account for the fact that not all deliberation will result in agreement. Putting deliberative democracy into practice is difficult. Kevin Mattson suggests that deliberation should be celebrated in its own right, without the requirement that it always result in a policy shift or immediate social change.[68] Similarly, Jane Mansbridge argues quality deliberation "will have opened areas of agreement and will have clarified the remaining areas of conflict. The participants will have come to understand their interests, including conflicting interests, better than before deliberations."[69] Their definitions speak to the overlap between deliberation and public dialogue, seeing knowledge-building outcomes as meaningful regardless of whether decisions are made as a result of the deliberation.

Dialogue is fundamentally about knowledge-building.[70] Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard emphasize that dialogue is a process of "*learning* through inquiry and disclosure."[71] It is an everyday communication practice that plays a crucial role in fostering interconnectivity with others and in teaching us new things.[72] The goal of public dialogue is to cultivate relationships and understanding among participants.[73] This project follows scholars who define public dialogue as a constitutive process. Jennifer Duffield Hamilton and Caitlin Wills-Toker explain how "participants influence one another and produce new meanings" by "negotiating and constructing knowledge in and through talk."[74] Participants learn about one another by asking and responding to questions and listening to one another's answers and reflections. Thus, dialogue is cyclical process designed to cultivate understanding; it does not prioritize arriving at solutions or decisions. Levin, Fung, and Gastil admit it "can take many hours or days (or longer) for a group to move through a series of stages before it arrives at the point where participants truly understand each other's standpoint and appreciate the history and conviction of one

another's views."[75] Dialogues are open-ended, unfolding based on what is needed to allow everyone's perspectives and experiences to be both heard and understood.[76]

The flexible design of public dialogues does not mean they are unstructured.[77] Oliver Escobar explains that dialogues are "facilitated through specific formats and norms of engagement that seek to create safe spaces for collaborative inquiry."[78] Dialogues provide participants from different identities and groups space to learn about one another. Therefore, dialogue settings must prioritize "a group environment that is conducive to honest self-expression, careful self-reflection, and thoughtful probing and perspective taking," according to Levine, Gastil, and Fung.[79] Scholars and practitioners of public dialogue emphasize that a welcoming space for engagement is essential for success. Dialogue organizers must find an accessible physical space for the conversation and participants must be psychologically open to listening and collaboration.[80]

Facilitators also play an active role in dialogue processes. Kimberly A. Pearce, Shawn Spano, and W. Barnett Pearce argue that "dialogue does not occur naturally; it is a rare form of communication that must be carefully nurtured and facilitated to be enacted successfully."[81] Typically, dialogues are led by facilitators who set the parameters for engagement through norms. These guidelines may include values, such as respect, or rules, like requiring everyone to participate. At times, facilitators determine who is allowed to speak and when. Facilitators frame the communicative interactions in the dialogue by setting guidelines, helping participants dialogue across difference, and managing challenges facing the group in conversation.[82]. Facilitators can model communication practices to prevent common pitfalls of dialogues, such as antagonistic or aggressive behavior.[83] Facilitators direct the conversation based on the needs and goals of the particular dialogue event. For example, some dialogues may be facilitated to

brainstorm new ideas, while others may be focused on narrowing down a series of ideas. The agenda and questions asked by the facilitator significantly shape the conversation.[84] Research suggests participants are unlikely to have productive and meaningful dialogues without the assistance of a skilled facilitator.

Although deliberation and dialogue are distinct processes, in practice they can be imbricated. Scholar have charted what Escobar calls the “dialogic turn in public deliberation theory and practice.”[85] James Bohman defines public deliberation as “a dialogical process of exchanging reasons for the purpose of resolving problematic situations that cannot be settled without interpersonal coordination and cooperation…deliberation is a joint, cooperative activity.”[86] He argues deliberation is “dialogue with a particular goal.”[87] Similarly, David Levasseur and Diana B. Carlin describe deliberation as “dialogic process.”[88] Stephanie Burkhalter, John Gastil, and Todd Kelshaw argue deliberation can include dialogic practices to make the conversation “more democratic.”[89] These practices occur when participants listen, empathize, and collaboratively redefine how issues are discussed.[90] Joohan Kim and Eun Joo Kim forward *dialogic* deliberation as an antecedent to instrumental deliberation. Dialogic deliberation is not constrained by “specific purposes and goals.” Instead, participants “freely interact with one another to understand mutually the self and others, resulting in the production and reproduction of rules, shared values, and reasons for public deliberation.”[91]

Dialogue may be necessary for individuals to engage in successful deliberation. Levine, Gastil, and Fung suggest dialogue can be a means of “bridging linguistic, social, and epistemological chasms between different subgroups of the potentially deliberative body.”[92] Generating mutual understanding and open-ended exploration can be transformational in deliberative settings, helping participants move beyond intractability toward collaboration.[93]

Nola Heidlebaugh explicitly argues public dialogues should be "held for the purpose of contributing in some way to better deliberation on a public issue" because dialogue can shape and transform the discursive patterns used to talk about public problems.[94] Hamilton and Wills-Toker point out that dialogue may result in decision-making based on the "understanding gained through sense-making discourse," even though that is not the expressed intent of dialogic processes. Dialogue can also be used to negotiate meaning and engage diverse perspectives after a decision has been made.[95] The dialogic turn in deliberation integrates inquiry and epistemic processes into the deliberative practice of decision-making.[96]

Public conversations may vacillate between deliberation and dialogue; organizers should prioritize the mode of discourse that best serves the goals of the communication setting.[97] Escobar identifies the communication practices in deliberation and dialogue, providing useful distinctions for determining which approach fits a discursive community's needs. Deliberation is a process "oriented to decision-making," using "advocacy" as its central pattern of communication. Dialogue is "not oriented to decision-making" and uses "inquiry" as is communication pattern. Deliberative dialogue is "oriented to decision-making" and uses "inquiry" as its pattern of communication.[98] Acknowledging how dialogue and deliberation are intertwined is useful for understanding how deliberation and dialogue actually work.[99]

Problems in Public Conversations

In their ideal form, deliberation and dialogue allow diverse communities to participate in democratic life through discursive processes for decision-making and knowledge-building.[100] In practice, however, deliberation and dialogue do not always live up to their theoretical conceptions. Shortcomings in equity, inclusivity, and cooperation in public conversations

undermine their promise for democracy. Research on public conversations reveal a gap between theory and actual practices of deliberation and dialogue.

Deliberation and dialogue struggle to engage diverse communities meaningfully and equitably. As the world becomes simultaneously more globalized and digitalized, people are interacting in new ways with an increasingly diverse set of experiences.[101] Kenneth N. Cissna and Rob Anderson outline the challenges facing contemporary public conversations: "we live in an increasingly and necessarily pluralized society and in an era of persistent conflicts and disagreements across ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual preference, as well as ideological, economic, power, and status distinctions."[102] Public conversation theory and praxis have not adequately accounted for diversity and inequity or for the size and spread of different communities. Bohman contends public conversations "should in principle be open to everyone," however, actual practices of deliberation and dialogue include a range of discursive settings with varying degrees of inclusivity.[103] Theories of deliberation imagine it as a process in which participants "manage differences and solve social problems" in an "open-minded give and take of reasons among equals."[104] Yet, scholars have critiqued these theories for painting an unrealistic picture of deliberative exchanges, for erasing systemic differences in power and privilege, and for not accounting for the diversity of our society.

Equality in public conversations requires decisions to be made based not on special interests or social status, but through a discursive process that is open to everyone. Theoretically, all people should have access to "both the agenda-setting and policy-making stages" of a public deliberative process, meaning all participants should be given a choice about their participation and the solutions put forth.[105] Although not all opinions can be expected to be relevant to the issue being discussed, all participants should have "equal and adequate opportunity to

contribute"[106] and the views of all participants ought to be given due consideration.[107] Gastil and Black argue the promise of equality also means that public conversations should aim to "fully grasp the values and interests of different people affected by the issue being deliberated."[108] Research on deliberation and dialogue demonstrates the difficulty of ensuring these standards of equality are met, resulting in a gap between theory and practice.[109] Researchers also note that these measures of equality are difficult to achieve in a society rife with inequity.[110] Equality can also be assessed by whether deliberative decisions help eliminate social inequities.[111]

The acceptance of deliberation and dialogue relies on them being inclusive.[112] For the threshold of inclusion to be met in public conversations, all individuals must be seen as deserving and able to participate in the discussion. Each person should be given an equal chance to express their views, emotions, and reasons; to respond to and contribute new proposals; and to challenge inequitable treatment in the process.[113] Theorists identify several criteria for assessing inclusivity in public conversations. First, the opportunity to participate must be extended to all community members.[114] Second, "all participants have *a right to comprehend* what others are saying," argue Gastil and Black.[115] More specifically, all solutions and reasons must be shared in a manner that the general public can comprehend.[116] Third, individuals must be free to express the identities that matter most to them. Lastly, all participants must be allowed the opportunity to both forward and critique solutions.[117] While public conversation theory forwards these measures of inclusivity, analysis of actual deliberation demonstrate that these measures are difficult to meet.[118]

Cultural norms also determine the legitimacy of a deliberative process for its participants. These norms shape rhetorical practices and interactions between participants in the deliberative process, especially among strangers. Deliberative spaces that fail to account for cultural practices

may not be equitable or inclusive.[119] Young critiques existing norms of deliberation as "dispassionate and disembodied." Emotional displays have been dismissed and have delegitimized participants' testimony in deliberative spaces. These norms privilege white, (upper) middle-class men, marginalizing the speech cultures of people of color and women.[120] Nancy Fraser argues the erasure of difference articulated in some theories of deliberation can reinforce hegemonic discursive norms and power structures.[121]

Real examples of deliberation reveal how deliberative values can be in tension with one another, demonstrating what Viorel Țuțui terms "the paradox of democratic deliberation."[122] Jason Hannon identifies potentially competing priorities in deliberation: "reaching an outcome" versus "maintaining fairness."[123] A deliberation must serve its decision-making function, but to be democratic, the deliberative process must not sacrifice equality. Facilitators identify inequality as a major hurdle to quality deliberation. Research demonstrates that—in a struggle between reaching decisions and making the deliberative process fair—getting to an outcome often wins out over an equitable process.[124]

A challenge for dialogue is that it requires a highly cultivated environment to be successful. Pearce, Spano, and Pearce "consistently observed that participants [in public dialogue] worked better, responded more favorably, were more receptive to ideas contrary to theirs, and arrived at better decisions when the communication was characterized by respect, deep listening, openness, and curiosity."[125] Facilitating and maintaining these values during a dialogue, however, is not easy. Studies of community dialogues show individuals struggle to communicate in a respectful manner, embrace diversity, and be open to different perspectives—the very principles on which public conversations are premised.[126] Many factors influence dialogues, including: the ability to cultivate a safe space, openness, and respect; the embrace of

multiple modes of communication such as storytelling and listening; the willingness of participants to listen to understand rather than with judgment; the time and space to ask questions together; the possibility of finding commonalities and embracing difference; and the balance between advocacy and inquiry.[127] With so many factors to manage, it is unsurprising that dialogues often fall short of the ideal.

Another problem in public dialogue is that it is difficult to both allow for and manage conflict. Although dialogue emphasizes understanding and openness, that does not mean it avoids conflict. In fact, disagreement emerges in dialogue *because* participants are expected to share their unique experiences and perspectives in order to build understanding. As Black and Wiederhold write: "although public dialogue events are structured to encourage open and respectful conversation about different ideas, the expression of disagreement is still an important and difficult task for participants to negotiate."[128] Hamilton and Wills-Toker identify dissensus as a "process of orienting to one another and creating meanings for the situation" in dialogue across differences, but participants may struggle to engage in dissensus in a productive and respectful way.[129] Dialogic communication requires a balance between sincere open-mindedness towards the other's perspectives and commitment to one's own positions.[130] Individual perspectives must remain apparent; the goal of dialogue is not to awash all perspectives together.[131] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune emphasize that distinct perspectives should not be assimilated into "a bland sameness" in a meaningful and productive dialogue.[132] Therefore, outcomes of a conversation "may resemble consensus, but they may also resemble conflict."[133] Analysis of existing practices of dialogue reveal the challenge of facilitating discussions that manage conflict well.

The Promise of Empathy

The problems outlined previously call attention to the need for empathy in public conversations. I argue empathy can elevate deliberative and dialogic discourse, leading to better communication practices. Michael E. Morrell identifies a role for empathy in cultivating a healthy democracy: "evidence indicates that higher predispositions to empathy will likely increase the healthy functioning of democratic society by encouraging citizens to show more concern for their fellow citizens, increasing citizens' tolerance of outgroups, and decreasing biases in judgments that increase misunderstandings among citizens."[134] Democratic decision-making relies on public conversations characterized by reciprocal respect—a process in which empathy seemingly has a role.[135]

Empathy offers a solution to the challenges of deliberation and dialogue because it calls on participants to sincerely consider others' perspectives and attunes those deliberating to practices of communication that prioritize listening and open-mindedness.[136] Additionally, participants who empathize are more likely to be mindful of the impact of their words on others.[137] Quality deliberation and dialogue require respect and receptiveness.[138] The ideal deliberative interaction asks participants to recognize that different points of view could provide meaningful and previously unconsidered solutions and asks participants to earnestly consider different perspectives and reasons offered in the discussion.[139] This ideal can be realized through empathetic practices of communication. Empathy is practiced through conversation, listening, and collaborative action to foster mutual understanding.[140] Empathizing requires an individual to suspend rejection of another's position, without first understanding that position.[141] Empathy does not require that participants approve of the other's perspective, but rather that they understand why the other holds that opinion. Approval and understanding are separated, making

it possible for participants to sincerely take alternative perspectives into consideration. Following this logic, empathy's role in deliberation and dialogue is to help the participants "imagine a view of the world that one does not share."[142] It can inspire individuals to find new opportunities, share their perspectives, recognize a sense of community, and consider the importance of others in their own well-being.[143] Without empathy, public conversation participants may not fully understand the needs of others.

The social value of empathy also demonstrates how it could benefit deliberative and dialogic contexts. Research suggests that empathy is generally seen as a trait that contributes to whether or not someone is a "good person."[144] Its perceived social value allows facilitators in dialogue and deliberative settings to actively promote its cultivation and motivate participants to try to empathize. Empathy is worth cultivating because it is a core tenet of peacebuilding[145] and necessary for a culture of peace.[146] A lack of empathy contributes to militarism in nation-states and actors,[147] trolling behavior in Internet users,[148] and close-mindedness.[149] Empathy creates empowerment and recognition,[150] open-mindedness,[151] respect for all people,[152] a sense of interconnectedness,[153] concern for[154] and deep understanding of others,[155] increases cooperation,[156] maintains nonviolence,[157] and promotes peace.[158] In short, empathy has the capacity to be a powerful process for cultivating an environment conducive to rich public conversations that promote social good.

Empathy as Process

Empathy is a process rather than a state of being.[159] Specifically, empathy is a process through which individuals gather knowledge, aligning it with the purpose of deliberative and dialogic exchanges, whether to come to a decision or to build understanding.[160] Defining empathy as a process distinguishes empathy from a singular emotion – "rather [it is] a capacity, a

tool used to achieve a variety of ends" writes Susan Bandes.[161] It is not a singular moment, feeling, or thing;[162] it is an ongoing endeavor that "involves being sensitive, moment by moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person," explains Carl Rogers.[163] From a rhetorical perspective, this explanation accounts for the expressions and communicative behaviors participants in deliberation and dialogue use moment-to-moment in relation to their fellow participants. The process of empathy is facilitated through communication acts. Lynn Cameron suggests empathizing is "something that occurs in talk and as something that emerges from talk."[164] Similarly, Sharon Krause explains: "empathy itself is not a sentiment but a vehicle for the communication of sentiments."[165] Understanding empathy as a process demonstrates its rhetorical nature.

Empathy as Praxis

Understanding empathy as a practice helps make sense of how it can be enacted and expressed. Empathy is as an active praxis based on the understanding of another's feelings that requires a willingness to be open-minded.[166] To empathize is an active endeavor; as Ann Jurecic muses: "empathy is a practice, a process that extends in time. To make it work takes both effort and humility."[167] Conceptualizing empathy as praxis captures how empathizing enables participants to make sense of others' implicit and explicit commitments in public conversation.[168]

More specifically, empathy is a *rhetorical* practice. Dennis A. Lynch suggests the "practice of empathy" plays a role in persuasion when a speaker includes emotional appeals, considers others in the process of invention, and frames their argument in a way that brings people together "without having to erase our differences."[169] Similarly, Lisa Blankenship characterizes "rhetorical empathy" as an "invitational stance." She forwards empathy as a

strategy that "offers possibilities for engaging across difference."[170] These rhetorical conceptions of empathy depict it as largely instrumental. However, empathy as practice is also generative. It helps constitute new ways of thinking about, understanding, and addressing social problems and others' experiences. William DeGenaro sees empathy as rhetorical practice that encourages us to be mindful of our communicative behavior. Empathy shapes "how we imagine one another, how we communicate with one another, and the stances we take on issues of public importance."[171] These conceptions of empathy as a rhetorical practice help us imagine how empathy can play a role in deliberation and dialogue.

Expressed Empathy

Empathy has been defined and used ambiguously for a long time, well before the word first appeared in popular vernacular.[172] A term as "conceptually muddy" as empathy can mean scholars are talking about entirely different phenomena.[173] Both colloquially and in academic research, people often make a distinction between empathy and sympathy. Empathy has been characterized as more complex than sympathy; it requires listening, observation, and imagination to try to know how another feels and experiences life.[174]

To define what I term *expressed empathy*, I turn to theories of empathy from scholars of cognitive science, philosophy, and communication. I borrow from Amy Coplan's conceptualization of empathy to articulate a rhetorical approach. Her definition incorporates three central features: "affective matching, other-oriented perspective taking, and clear self-other differentiation."[175] Applying empathy to public conversations requires recognizing empathy as "language-mediated."[176] Therefore, I translate Coplan's definition in rhetorical terms: individuals empathize when they 1) express shared emotions with the other, 2) use language that acknowledges and imagines the other's experience, and 3) articulate a recognition of difference

between self and other. Ideally, *expressed empathy* is achieved when individuals in a discursive interaction demonstrate all three features of empathy. However, I consider any interaction that includes one of the three core features of expressed empathy to be moments of *emergent empathy*. Empathy can emerge in discursive interactions from "moment to moment" or develop over a "longer timescale."[177]

Expressing shared emotion

Expressing shared emotions demonstrates that an individual both acknowledges and is trying to understand the other person's emotional state or experience.[178] The etymology of empathy reflects the intentionality required of affective matching: "empathy comes from the Greek *empatheia* – a *em* (into) and *pathos* (feeling)."[179] As Daryl Koehn explains, empathy "requires us to experience someone else's feelings and thought *because* we have attended to this party's feelings and thoughts."[180] Coplan makes a similar point when defining shared affect as a characteristic of empathy. She distinguishes "genuine empathy" from "emotional cognition"—an "automatic and involuntary" perception of another's emotions, with no cognitive effort required to adopt the other's perspective.[181] Her distinction suggests that individuals practicing "genuine empathy" cannot simply know what the other's emotional state is, but must actively work to understand that experience. Although as a rhetorical scholar I am not concerned what happens inside a person's brain or their actual intent, Coplan's distinction is still useful. Individuals in discursive interactions engage in a process of sense-making. This sense-making process is the very work required for empathizing: making "sense of another's emotions and what is on their mind."[182] Therefore, in terms of expressed empathy, affective matching requires a statement of shared understanding about the other's emotion. For example, if a participant in a dialogue were to say, "I understand you are sad, but I cannot see why," that would not constitute expressed

empathy. Instead, the participant must acknowledge the other's emotional state *and* express a sense of understanding of how it feels to feel that way. For example, a participant may say, "I hear you when you say that makes you feel sad and I think I know how you feel." The threshold for empathy then is bipartite: expressing emotional recognition *and* an attempt at perspective taking. This feature of empathy highlights the distinction between empathizing *with* someone and having sympathy *for* someone.[183]

Using language that acknowledges and imagines the other's experience

The second core feature of empathy requires individuals to use language that acknowledges and imagines the other's experience. Coplan describes this feature of empathy as a "complex imaginative process."[184] Individuals use their imagination to recreate what another may feel in a particular situation. This process requires listening to the other person's perspective and observing them to move away from our own viewpoint toward theirs.[185] Kenneth Burke's concept of identification clarifies this process of perspective taking. Dennis Lynch explains Burke's concept as "the bodily effort to enter, through 'speech, gesture, and tonality,' into another's ways of being or life-world."[186] Cameron argues that learning more about another from that other person better equips an individual to do the imaginative work of empathy. Therefore, individuals must engage in a process of learning about one another's personal histories and subsequently learn "each other's way of using language and metaphor."[187] Importantly, the perspective taking process must be other-oriented. Coplan contends other-oriented perspective taking happens when "a person represents the other's situation from the other person's point of view and attempts to simulate the target individual's experiences as though she were the target individual."[188] Other-oriented perspective taking requires actively working to understand the

other's perspectives, while acknowledging the limitations of our own imagination in understanding the other.[189]

I turn to another scholar's analysis of empathy to demonstrate how this second feature of empathy is expressed in practice. Judy C. Wilson studied student writing at the end of a service-learning course. A student wrote, "I came to understand that migrant workers care deeply for their families and work hard to support them."[190] This example uses language that acknowledges the other's experience from a nonjudgmental position, in line with my definition of expressed empathy. This student response serves as a model for what this second tenet of expressed empathy can look like in public conversations. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins suggest people "display empathy by perceiving sensitively."[191] Their interpretation of empathy infuses an ethic of care and mindfulness into the imaginative process. My own approach to identifying empathy is attuned to discourses where expressions acknowledging the other's experience are defined by a sense of understanding rather than judgement.

Articulate a recognition of difference between self and other

The third feature of expressed empathy is articulating recognition of difference between one's self and the other person. Self-other differentiation requires "a cognitive recognition of distinctions between self and other," writes Kimberly Chabot Davis.[192] This distinction allows for enough social distance for empathizing to be possible. Amy Coplan explains: "one thus remains aware of the fact that the other is a separate person and that the other has his own unique thoughts, feelings, desires and characteristics. This enables deep engagement with the other while preventing one from losing sight of where the self ends and the other begins *and* where the other ends and the self begins."[193] Expressions of self-other differentiation may acknowledge and understand the experiences of the other without trying to draw generalizations or shallow

similarities between the listener and the speaker. Lynne N. Henderson describes the self-other distinction in her definition of empathy: empathy "is *not* absorption by the other, but rather simply the relationship of self to other, individual to community."[194] This relationship allows room for difference. Self-other differentiation helps manage "our everyday intracultural and intercultural encounters" since, as Peiling Zhao reflects, "most of the time we need to understand those whose experiences, emotional responses and attitudes to the same situations, and reference frameworks are different from us."[195] Critiques of empathy contend it erases the experiences of the other.[196] Acknowledging the difference between self and other, however, helps circumnavigate this critique. Moreover, research demonstrates that self-other differentiation is necessary in order to imagine how the other person feels in their situation.[197]

Kenneth N. Cissna and Rob Anderson describe empathizing as "active acknowledgement of the reality of the other, without forfeiting one's own position" in dialogic communication.[198] This conceptualization demonstrates how empathy allows for difference in public conversations. Young challenges the assumption that unity be either the "starting point or goal of deliberative democracy." Acknowledging that consensus is not always necessary—or even the ultimate objective—in deliberation makes room for diverse perspectives in discursive interactions. When unity is prioritized, it limits the potential for dialogue to change or renegotiate our perspectives; rather "we only come to see ourselves mirrored in others." However, if participants accept and anticipate that they will interact with others who think differently or who occupy a different social status than them, then participants will be aware of and more comfortable acknowledging those differences. While recognizing difference does not prevent similarities between participants from emerging, Young argues it does ensure that each person is sensitive to the fact that they "[can]not comprehend the perspective of others differently located" and that those

alternative perspectives “cannot be assimilated into one’s own.”[199] Thus, self-other differentiation is essential for meaningful public conversations.

Tensions in expressed empathy

Tensions can exist between acknowledging the other’s experience and maintaining self-other differentiation. Eric Leake argues scholars must have a “rhetorical awareness of empathy as a persuasive force that is situational, purposeful, and built upon identification” in order to make sense of “this tension between differentiation and overlap.”[200] Consider an example from Phoenix Mo and Neil Coulson’s content analysis of messages in an online support group. They categorize this post as an example of empathy: “one participant wrote to another member who had lost his partner to AIDS: ‘I lost my husband to AIDS in 19XX, so I know where you are coming from.’”[201] While this post may not immediately appear to meet the criteria I have created for expressed empathy (because the writer emphasizes the sameness of their scenarios), in this case, the understanding of the other’s experience is rooted in having experienced the loss of a partner due to the same illness. Context—as rhetorical scholars understand—matters in this expression. Perhaps the ideal expression of empathy would include an additional sentence recognizing the difference in the nature of their relationships, say if the writer was in a same-sex partnership and the other person was in a heterosexual marriage. But noticeably, the writer says, “I know where you are coming from,” *not* “I know what you are experiencing.” The degree of differentiation remains. Leake provides another example: a student could “observe shared vulnerabilities and write that were circumstances different, a member of his or her family could be homeless.”[202] Again, the tension between understanding the other’s experience and the recognition of self-other differentiation requires critical sensibility. The student acknowledges

the other's experience—homelessness—but maintains a degree of difference by recognizing that they have not experienced that hardship.

Accounting for Challenges to Empathy

Empathy is not without critics. Paul Bloom critiques empathy for being "biased" (it is easier to empathize with others who are similar to us) and "narrow" (we empathize with individuals, ignoring statistical data or significance).[203] Bloom names this critique the "spotlight effect." The spotlight effect of empathy encourages individuals to focus their empathy on people with whom they interact, neglecting broader patterns of suffering. Therefore, it is difficult to extend to more than one or two people. Similarly, Jesse Prinz contends: "empathy is ineluctably local."[204] These critiques, however, demonstrate empathy's appropriateness in deliberative and dialogue settings. The scope of empathy in deliberation and dialogue *is* local. Participants are responsible for empathizing with the people with whom they are in conversation. The individuals within the context of the conversation can represent the needs of a broader public.

Additionally, both Bloom and Prinz tend toward arguing against emotional rather than cognitive empathy.[205] Gregory R. Peterson explains that emotional empathy is the "homology of feeling," while cognitive empathy involves "imagining what the other as other would think and do in a given situation."[206] My definition of expressed empathy prioritizes cognitive empathy by suggesting expressions of shared emotion involve sense-making, rather than simply reflecting the emotions of the other person. Philemon Eva also critiques Bloom's narrow conceptions of empathy: "There is little or no discussion of empathy as a social, dialogic practice of communication: the attempt to listen and respond, to understand and to feel, but also to check the accuracy of understanding and clarify feeling; to actively acknowledge, and attempt to bridge, difference; to reach for a shared understanding while recognizing the limitations of this."[207]

Eva's characterization of empathy as a communicative practice aligns more closely with my conception of empathy than Bloom's.

Mary F. Scudder explicitly argues against empathy in deliberative democracy. Yet her alternative approach aligns with the third tenet of expressed empathy that requires self-other differentiation. She suggests that participants must understand that they can never fully understand the experiences of others. She forwards "the difference approach" as a way for participants to deliberate across "social distance." She writes:

> The realization of the limits to mutual understanding in the presence of deep difference opens us more vividly to the ways in which we are inconspicuously limited in our opinions, our basic understanding of issues, and our relationship to the democratic community. This sort of opening cannot occur if we imagine only our commonalities or assume that we can know or feel how another feels. To foster greater openness, we should relish our differences instead of moving quickly beyond them for the sake of imagining commonalities.[208]

Scudder imagines a narrower definition of empathy than my own, which does account for difference.

Empathy and Neurodiversity

Empathy also faces critiques from the neurodiversity movement. Paul Heilker and Melanie Yergeau explain empathy is "a loaded worded in autism discourse."[209] In earlier medical diagnoses, people with autism were thought to be incapable of empathizing. However, newer research "contest[s] dominant deficit-based theories of autism." People with autism do empathize with others, demonstrating the bias of older research on neurodiversity.[210] As Paul Antze reflects, the difficulty of imagining the experiences of others does not simply stem from neurodiversity, but from other differences as well.[211] I recognize that I need to be mindful of the different ways people communicate when identifying expressed empathy and take seriously

Heilker and Melanie Yergeau's call for "us to reconstrue what we have historically seen as language deficits as, instead, language *differences*."[212]

Empathy and Power

Unequal expressions of empathy is also a concern for scholars of empathy. Marginalized individuals are better equipped to empathize because their success in society hinges on their ability to understand the experiences and perspectives of those in positions of power.[213] Sara DeTurk cites multiple studies showing how individuals with less power are more willing—and therefore able—to take on the role of the other than those in positions of power.[214] Based on these trends, I argue facilitating empathetic expressions from individuals with privilege is most important.

Research demonstrates that empathy can shape attitudes and behavior. Perspective taking can elevate the quality of social interactions and help individuals build and maintain social relationships by disrupting stereotypes.[215] If an individual imagines the experiences and point of view of a person from a marginalized group, such as how institutional circumstances shape their life, this imaginative exercise prompts "increased valuing of this individual's welfare." If that person's identity or group membership plays a significant role in their marginalization, the empathizer then extends this empathy to others who identify as a part of that identity category. Empathy for one person is generalized to create empathy for a collective.[216] Research also shows how empathy for a member of a stigmatized group can prompt action designed to help that group.[217] As Chabot Davis argues through her research on the impact of empathy on racial biases, "empathetic experiences of seeing from the vantage point of another can lead to a recognition of that person's subjecthood and agency, and can lead the white empathizer to not only become critically aware of racial hierarchy, but to desire to work against the structures of

inequality wherein her own power resides."[218] Contemporary democracies are diverse. Therefore, public deliberative and dialogic exchanges need to ensure that marginalized voices are not trampled over or ignored *and* that privileged participants empathize with others.

Self-Oriented Perspective Taking

While self-oriented perspective taking may be a result of good intentions, it is "pseudo-empathy." The individual engaged in self-oriented perspective taking assumes that they know how the other person is thinking and feeling, when really they may not.[219] This concern is at the heart of some scholars' critiques of empathy. Lynch writes: "others then become unnecessary, for I know what they want and need – and...knowing what I know about them, I am now in a position to better enforce existing structures of power in their name."[220] Self-oriented perspective taking displaces the other and undermines the possibility of empathizing with individuals unlike us.[221] My definition of expressed empathy addresses these critiques by requiring that expressed empathy be other-oriented.

Overcoming the pitfalls of self-oriented perspective requires intentionality and self-reflexiveness. Empathizing with people whose experiences are less familiar and with whom we do not automatically identify requires greater responsibility and more work. Coplan explains: "the effort and regulation involved in other-oriented perspective taking suggests that empathy is a motivated and controlled process, which is neither automatic nor involuntary and demands that the observer attend to relevant differences between self and other."[222] The structure of public conversations can frame conversations to encourage individuals to acknowledge the differences between them, providing space for other-oriented perspective taking. Empathy requires critical self-reflection about biases and should be driven by care for others. Other-oriented perspective taking is defined by "feeling *with*" the other, resulting in changed perception of others or the

world.[223] Empathy's power lies in "its potential to transform worldviews through an openness to the unknown and a willingness to unlearn what has been naturalized," writes Rebeccah J. Nelems.[224] Other-oriented perspective taking should include an understanding of privilege in order for the process of empathy to disrupt learned stereotypes and hegemonic beliefs and to avoid the colonizing implications of standing in another person's shoes.[225]

Analytical Approach

This dissertation takes a rhetorical approach to analyzing real examples of deliberation and dialogue in our democracy. Gerard Hauser and Chantal Benoit-Barne argue deliberative democracy scholarship has not adequately considered the rhetorical dimensions of the process. They contend that understanding the rhetorical dimensions of deliberative democracy is essential for understanding "how democracy actually works." Rhetorical studies can help uncover ways to cultivate a "culture of civic engagement" that can make deliberative democracy "work even better."[226] This project contributes to this line of research by uncovering the discursive practices in deliberative and dialogue settings that facilitate empathy. By "conceptualizing democratic deliberation as rhetorical," rhetorical scholars evaluate and critique actual deliberative democratic practices.[227] Rhetorical analysis of public dialogue can "help to prevent the democratic process from ignoring, quieting, or suppressing dissent," by helping us to better understand the communication interactions within these spaces.[228] A rhetorical perspective looks at the discursive outcomes of public conversations, specifically making sense of how discussion can lead to a better understanding of key problems and of the subsequent evolving opinions that emerge from this new understanding.[229]

Research about improving the quality of deliberative and dialogic discourse can expand its possibilities for democracy and participants. The legitimacy of public conversations is tied to

participants' ability to be empathetic, to be fair, and to balance listening and speaking.[230] A rhetorical perspective is particularly useful for studying actual practices of deliberation and dialogue in order to improve them. Rhetorical scholars have articulated the importance of studying "the discursive arenas and rhetorical practices" of "actually existing democracy," which include public conversation settings.[231] This project fits into a larger scholarly conversation about what constitutes quality deliberation and dialogue. Lawrence and Bates point to the need for more scholarly work on the "discursive 'moves'" made by participants that impact both the quality of and outcomes of deliberation and dialogue.[232] Christian Kock contends that those who study deliberative communication should consider "what participants 'say' when they participate."[233] Cissna and Anderson argue more studies of public dialogue are needed to help grapple with 21st century problems: "Recent controversies swirling around issues of political correctness, abortion, race, censorship, terrorism, and others—far from showing the impossibility of public dialogue—mandate that we learn more about its potential…[how] can [we] facilitate public talking and listening, even when participants do not initially identify with, or even like or respect, the particular persons or positions they confront?"[234] By identifying communication practices that facilitate empathy, this project contributes to research designed to understand actual deliberation and dialogue discourses.

The discourses that emerge from deliberation and dialogue shape our democracy. A rhetorical perspective sheds light on the constitutive power of deliberative and dialogic exchanges, specifically the way discourse influences social and political issues. As Anderson, Cissna, and Clune articulate: "if we are attuned to rhetoric, the social role of dialogue becomes clearer. Communication is far more than just a representation of reality, but in dynamic and reflexive ways it actually constitutes the reality to which it also responds."[235] The fluidity of

conversational exchanges means participants are perpetually "moving" between the roles of speaker and listener. This cyclical and sporadic process of changing roles makes the discourse in these interactions "co-constructed." Thus, "each participant, in a deliberation, impacts preceding comments, making utterances important at a micro level." Together, however, the emergent discourse merits analysis at the macro level. The result is that "deliberation creates a 'synergistic' text;" the collective discourse emerging from exchanges results in a transformed sense of shared meaning.[236] This dissertation is poised to contribute to understanding the constitutive practices that facilitate empathy in public conversations.

Empathy coheres with a constitutive understanding of deliberation and dialogue. Robert Asen identifies "imagining" as a "constitutive social force" that influences the deliberative public sphere.[237] Discursive encounters with other individuals makes "collective imagining" possible. The collective imagination represents the "constellation of shared assumptions, values, perceptions, and beliefs for matters identified explicitly as topics of discussion." Imagining is an active process through which participants in deliberation reconsider the norms of their collective imagination.[238] To come to new ideas and understanding, deliberation and dialogue participants are asked to collectively constitute and imagine a set of values and perceptions. This process mirrors the imagination required of empathizing: discerning the other's point of view and lived experiences.

Close Textual Analysis

Rhetorical critics make sense of situated discourse. Each dialogue or deliberation creates a community coming together around the particular exigence of that discourse setting.[239] A rhetorical approach to empathy requires understanding emotions as "socially and historically constituted."[240] Therefore, expressions of empathy should be understood within the social

dynamics of the discourse in which they emerge.[241] As Celeste Condit suggests, "the exacting reading of texts as they are situated in history" is the unique contribution rhetorical scholars provide to the academic community and understanding of human communication.[242]

My approach to rhetorical analysis in this project draws on Michael Leff and Andrew Sachs' conception of close textual analysis. They argue for an analytical approach that "frame[s] the discourse within its context" and centers "the text itself and the rhetorical features embedded within it."[243] Attention to the particular features of the text drives interpretation.[244] Their approach considers what they call the "the complex interplay among representational content, discursive form, and the context of situation." By considering context, the rhetorical critic can make sense of how the discourse reflects and constitutes the socio-political conditions in which it exists. Close reading does not "bracket rhetorical time" when looking at the "internal movement of the text," but instead remains mindful of the "real historical time" and the "world outside the text," positioning the text in its context and "larger ideological horizon."[245] This critical approach is useful for analyzing the specific exchanges in a deliberation or dialogue and for recognizing that participants do not exist in a vacuum, but rather bring their world views and perspectives into the exchange. As James F. Klumpp and Thomas A. Hollihan explain, "social order is *performed* in language."[246] My critical approach responds to Leake's call for "a greater appreciation of situation in our study of empathy and the conditions upon which is it enabled and suppressed."[247] He argues empathy is "socially determined and rhetorically mediated."[248] Close textual analysis encourages careful consideration of the specificities of the participants' language at sentence, phrase, and paragraph levels, while accounting for the ways in which those utterances reflect their identities and social positions.

Leff and Sachs' approach is useful for making sense of the discourse in the cases in this dissertation because it considers how discourse shapes the responses to it:

> The critical process seeks to explain how the rhetorical performance invites certain kinds of response. Working from the evidence within the text, the critic proceeds to make inferences about what the work is designed to do, how it is designed to do it, and how well that design functions to structure and transmit meanings within the realm of public experience.[249]

This description of the analytical approach captures the dialogical mode of communication that happens in deliberative and dialogue exchanges and asks the critic to make sense of these interactions. In the context of dialogue and deliberation, close textual analysis attunes the critic to ask what and how an utterance welcomes the responses it receives. In this project, I will be evaluating the exchanges between public conversation participants for moments of expressed empathy, considering how they (re)shape the discourse at the center of the exchange. Deliberation and dialogue communication practices reflect Leff and Sachs' definition of rhetorical discourse: "a verbal construction that blends form and content into a concrete whole—a whole that assigns meaning to a region of shared public experience and solicits an audience to embrace the meaning it constructs."[250] Dialogue and deliberation participants constitute meaning about the issues over which they deliberate—each exchange offering the individual's perspective on a particular issue. Close textual analysis brings attention to the moment-to-moment expressions that happen in deliberation and dialogue and positions these exchanges within the broader communication and social contexts that they address.

Interactions in deliberative and dialogue settings are largely spontaneous. Generally, participants in the cases in this dissertation are not sharing prepared statements, but rather responding to others' communication as the conversation unfolds. That does not, however, suggest that analysis that centers on the text is unproductive. These exchanges capture the real-

time expressions of participants as they respond to the exigencies and situational contexts of the interaction. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short identify psychological iconicity to describe how "the configuration of language in a text embodies states of mind and feeling that occurs in real world-experience."[251] Syntactically, utterances may imitate our feelings. It can be inferred that what a participant says and the way they say something captures their feelings. This approach can reveal the ways in which individuals express empathy through their discourse.

Empathy is "language-mediated."[252] Both words and actions can evoke empathy.[253] Deliberative and dialogic exchanges may involve a range of communication acts, including "understanding, imagining, valuing, desiring, storytelling, and the use of rhetoric and argumentation."[254] My definition of expressed empathy guides the analysis of these ways of communicating. In this project, I look for expressions of shared emotion and language that acknowledges the other's experiences that recognizes the difference between the self and other. I am also attuned to moments where participants seek clarification to better grasp the other's perspective, by listening to understand without being clouded by prejudgment.[255]

Significance

This dissertation responds to the calls for new research directions in the field of deliberation and dialogue. In their essay, "Communication Studies and Deliberative Democracy: Current Contributions and Future Possibilities," Martín Carcasson, Laura W. Black, and Elizabeth S. Sink ask: "How do we best deal with differences in our increasingly diverse communities?" They argue democracy suffers when poor-quality conversations undermine understanding of diverse perspectives and call for research on how public conversation can account for a multiplicity of voices in communities divided by differences in power and privilege, like the social and racial differences seen in the cases in this project. Their answer

foregrounds values, such as "equality, respect, comprehension, consideration, and mutual understanding," to which I would add empathy.[256]

Their essay also calls for projects from communication scholars that contribute to "the understanding of the actual processes" of deliberation. Scholars can help practitioners improve the quality of public conversations by analyzing the discourse of real discursive exchanges.[257] This project responds to this call by looking at actual instances of public conversations, rather than theorizing about empathy in deliberative and dialogic practices abstractedly.

This dissertation also responds to the work of rhetorical critics who explore empathy from a critical perspective. I follow Leake's project to extend "the rhetorical study of empathy to identify and analyze key social conditions that help determine empathic encounters, or their failure."[258] This project contributes to an understanding of the social conditions that make empathy possible in public conversation settings by considering which practices facilitate empathy in these specific communicative spaces. Research demonstrates that empathy can be learned.[259] Thus, analyzing practices that facilitate empathy can help us understand how to build empathy in future deliberations and dialogues.

In her book, *Hearing the Other Side*, Diana Mutz calls for "explicit norms" that would enable individuals to engage in informal discourse across difference in nondestructive ways.[260] This project responds to her call by seeing empathy as one answer for encouraging this type of engagement. Norms can be adapted to promote practices that facilitate empathy in public discussion. Norms, objectives, and rules often govern public conversations, making the conclusions I draw from my cases transferable to similar communication settings.[261] Specifically, my goal for this dissertation is to contribute to deliberation and dialogue praxis. The

importance of norms in deliberation and public dialogue suggest the praxis-oriented conclusions of this project could be meaningful contributions to both scholars and practitioners.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to the development of deliberation and dialogue practices that cultivate empathy. Participants in deliberation and public dialogue have the capacity to shape the discursive norms of our political culture. Analyzing these discursive processes reveals the ways in which ideas are forwarded, (re)shaped, and circulate in public. As Kock and Villadsen contend, "at a time of contentious and polarizing politics, such as our own, it is particularly important that frustrated citizens do not turn away from public discourse."[262] Infusing deliberative and dialogic discourse with empathy could be one way to ensure individuals stay engaged in the public communication practices essential to our democracy. A more productive and empathetic mode of engagement could induce more people to participate in public exchanges, a boon for a society seeking more equitable and better deliberated solutions. The exchanges in deliberation and public dialogue "represent the primary cultural resource for deliberative democracy to flourish in a nation of strangers."[263] I argue that just as scholars maintain that deliberation and public dialogue are essential to democracy, so is empathy.

Outline of Chapters

In this project, I analyze three cases of deliberative and dialogic discourse that, together, include a range of rhetorical practices. The first case is archival: I accessed the Citizens Interracial Committee Community Dialogue Tapes (1967-1969) through the San Diego State University digital archives. This archive includes digitized reel-to-reel tapes from the Committee's community dialogue meetings held from August 1967 to June 1969. San Diegans established the Citizens Interracial Committee (CIC) in 1963 as a body to organize "community dialogues and educate people about racial issues and concerns within city limits." The CIC

hosted biweekly "community dialogues" where people from constituencies across the city came together to discuss issues such as racism, police-community relations, housing, and education. Participants—who sometimes numbered as many as 30 people—included city officials, teachers, police officers, members of the media, CIC staff and board members, and community representatives. CIC Executive Director Carroll Waymon moderated the meetings. In Chapter 1, I analyze a collection of four dialogue tapes from 1968 addressing issues in the San Diego Unified School District, including discrimination against Latinx students, opportunity gaps, and curricular biases.[264] I analyze how the facilitation practices and the conversation structure shaped the empathy that emerged during the CIC meetings, identifying two types of expressed empathy that I term second- and third-person empathy. I articulate the consequences of these different expressions of empathy and discuss the conversation practices that facilitated their development.

The second case is contemporary and face-to-face. I examine 75 transcripts of community conversations hosted by the Local Voices Network (LVN) and New York Public Library (NYPL) from February 2019 to March 2020. LVN is a project of the non-profit Cortico. Cortico works with the MIT Center for Constructive Communication to bring "under-heard voices to the center of a stronger public dialogue."[265] LVN records community conversations and stores them on a digital platform, creating a digital network of community conversations.[266] In Chapter 2, I explain how the LVN-NYPL facilitators encouraged participants to tell personal stories and how participants expressed empathy based on analogous experiences as a result of this facilitation. I consider the value of expressed empathy based on comparable experiences and the role of difference in public conversations.

The third case is digital. I analyze videos from a virtual dialogue I hosted in partnership with the Dayton International Peace Museum during the COVID-19 pandemic. Five facilitators

led 23 participants in small group discussions. The dialogue followed a script created by Essential Partners, an organization that "equips people to live and work better together in community by building trust and understanding across differences" through dialogue.[267] In Chapter 3, I articulate how the participants used storytelling through kernel chains as a narrative resource for expressing empathy and illustrate the conforming influence of these narrative kernels.

The case studies represent three different types of public conversation within the context of deliberation and dialogue. Each chapter includes a brief historical framework for the case, close textual analysis of the public conversation discourse, and conclusions about the expressions of empathy that emerged. In the final chapter, I identify specific practices for facilitating empathy based on conclusions I draw across the three cases. The conclusion offers practical suggestions for deliberation and dialogue praxis and directions for future research.

Introduction Notes

[1] *Will Smith Surprises Viral Video Classmates for Their Kindness*. YouTube, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QntBkDFkiuY.

[2] Jonathan Borge, "Good News, Queer Eye Fans: The Fab Five Really Do Love Each Other," *Oprah Magazine*, May 27, 2019, https://www.oprahmag.com/entertainment/tv-movies/a26899312/netflix-queer-eye-fab-five-interview/.

[3] Pamela McClintock, "Box-Office Milestone: 'Won't You Be My Neighbor?' Becomes Top-Grossing Biodoc," *The Hollywood Reporter*, July 27, 2018, https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/wont-you-be-my-neighbor-is-top-grossing-biodoc-all-time-1130122.

[4]Jill Suttie, "Why the World Needs an Empathy Revolution." *Greater Good*, February 1, 2019, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_the_world_needs_an_empathy_revolution.

[5] Sasha Gonzales, "Why Empathy Is More Important than Ever in a World Full of Hate." *South China Morning Post*, February 22, 2018. https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/health-beauty/article/2134231/empathy-why-we-need-more-it-polarised-world-and-how.

[6] Jeremy Adam Smith, "Why We Need Empathy in the Age of Trump." *Greater Good*, November 11, 2016, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_we_need_empathy_in_the_age_of_trump.

[7] *The Power of Empathy with Pharrell Williams & Noted Co-Instructors | Official Trailer | MasterClass*. YouTube, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pZXfaZA_CM.

[8] *A New Breed of Political Ad Enters the Midterms*, Wall Street Journal Video, 2018, https://www.wsj.com/video/a-new-breed-of-political-ad-enters-the-midterms/7D2B2478-34F6-4207-B567-72E26915BAEF.html.

[9] See Matt Presser, "Empathy as Empowerment," *Usable Knowledge (Harvard Graduate School of Education)* (blog), July 2, 2017, https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/07/empathy-empowerment; and "Roots of Empathy – Roots of Empathy." Accessed December 4, 2021. https://us.rootsofempathy.org/roots-of-empathy/.

[10] Valerie Strauss, "Analysis | The Surprising Thing Google Learned about Its Employees — and What It Means for Today's Students," *Washington Post*, December 20, 2017, sec. Answer Sheet, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/12/20/the-surprising-thing-google-learned-about-its-employees-and-what-it-means-for-todays-students/; Indeed Editorial Team.,"Why Is Empathy Important in the Workplace? (And Steps To Improve Yours)," *Indeed Career Guide* (blog), September 6, 2021, https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/empathy-in-the-workplace; and Yoram Solomon, "10 Reasons Empathy Is the Most Important Skill You Will Ever Need to Succeed," Inc.com, October 4, 2017, https://www.inc.com/yoram-solomon/10-reasons-empathy-is-most-important-business-skill-you-will-ever-need.html.

[11] Rebeccah Nelems, "What Is This Thing Called Empathy?" In *Exploring Empathy*, edited by Nic Theo, 17. BRILL, 2017, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004360846_004.

[12] Yaffa Fredrick, "Welcome to the Fractured States of America," *CNN*, 2019, sec. Opinion, https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/11/opinions/fractured-states-of-america/part-one-fredrick.

[13] Thomas Carothers and Andrew O'Donohue, "How Americans Were Driven to Extremes," September 27, 2019, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2019-09-25/how-americans-were-driven-extremes.

[14] "America's Polarized Politics May Be Here to Stay," *The World from PRX*, June 3, 2019, https://theworld.org/stories/2019-06-03/americas-polarized-politics-may-be-here-stay.

[15] John Avlon, "Polarization Is Poisoning America. Here's an Antidote," *CNN*, November 1, 2019, sec. Opinion, https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/30/opinions/fractured-states-of-america-polarization-is-killing-us-avlon/index.html.

[16] Emma Green, "Americans Hate One Another. Impeachment Isn't Helping.," *The Atlantic*, November 2, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/11/impeachment-democrats-republicans-polarization/601264/.

[17] Jessica Taylor, "Republicans and Democrats Don't Agree, Or Like Each Other—And It's Worse Than Ever." *NPR*, October 5, 2017. https://www.npr.org/2017/10/05/555685136/republicans-and-democrats-dont-agree-dont-like-each-other-and-its-worst-than-eve.

[18] Yoni Appelbaum, "How America Ends," The Atlantic, November 12, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/12/how-america-ends/600757/.

[19] Dan Balz, “Americans Hate All the Partisanship, but They’re Also More Partisan than They Were.” *Washington Post*, October 26, 2019, sec. Politics, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/americans-hate-all-the-partisanship-but-theyre-also-more-partisan-than-they-were/2019/10/26/e1f4abe2-f762-11e9-a285-882a8e386a96_story.html.

[20] Jennifer Lynn McCoy, “Extreme Political Polarization Weakens Democracy – Can the US Avoid That Fate?,” *The Conversation*, October 31, 2018, http://theconversation.com/extreme-political-polarization-weakens-democracy-can-the-us-avoid-that-fate-105540.

[21] Harry Enten, “Congress’ Approval Rating Hasn’t Hit 30% in 10 Years. That’s a Record.” *CNN*, June 1, 2019, sec. Politics. https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/01/politics/poll-of-the-week-congress-approval-rating/index.html.

[22] Perhaps unsurprisingly, they point to a rise of individualism – arguably a tenant of declining empathy – in society as driving this type of communication in deliberative settings.

See David G. Levasseur and Diana B. Carlin, “Egocentric Argument and the Public Sphere: Citizen Deliberations on Public Policy and Policymakers,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 3 (2001): 423.

[23] Sara H. Konrath, Edward H. O’Brien, and Courtney Hsing, “Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students over Time: A Meta-Analysis,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 15, no. 2 (May 2011): 187, https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868310377395.

[24] Konrath, O’Brien, and Hsing, 191.

[25] Konrath, O’Brien, and Hsing, 191.

[26] James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 1.

[27] James McDonald, “I Agree, but …Finding Alternatives to Controversial Projects through Public Deliberation,” in *Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation*, ed. Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen (Penn State University Press, 2012), 201, http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17918.

[28] Nola J. Heidlebaugh, “Invention and Public Dialogue: Lessons from Rhetorical Theories,” *Communication Theory (1050-3293)* 18, no. 1 (February 2008): 34–35, ttps://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00312.x.

[29] Troy A. Murphy, “Romantic Democracy and the Rhetoric of Heroic Citizenship,” *Communication Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2003): 206.

[30] Young’s definition of “communicative democracy” specifically identifies “differences of culture, social perspective, or particularistic commitment as resources to draw on for reaching understanding in democratic discussion rather than as divisions that must be overcome.”

Iris Marion Young, “Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton University Press, 1996), 131.

[31] Alexander Livingston, “Avoiding Deliberative Democracy? Micropolitics, Manipulation, and the Public Sphere.,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 45, no. 3 (August 2012): 285–86.

[32] Christian Kock and Lisa S. Villadsen, eds. "Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation." In *Section II: Introduction*, 3:61. Penn State University Press, 2012. https://doi.org/10.5325/j.ctt7v660.

[33] Livingston, "Avoiding Deliberative Democracy," 270.

[34] See Scott Welsh, "Deliberative Democracy and the Rhetorical Production of Political Culture," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 4 (2002): 679; and Dennis F. Thimpson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11, no. 1 (June 1, 2008): 498. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.081306.070555.

My conception of reason is not tied to being rationale or traditional modes of argumentation. Rather it means "that legitimate decisions will be supported by reasons that all governed by those decisions can accept without having to negate their deeply held beliefs and values, or at least by reasons they cannot reasonably reject, because such rejection would entail forcing others to sacrifice their convictions." Therefore, reason is tied to "reasonableness," which is the willingness of citizens to work cooperatively toward a solution (Hicks, pg. 241-42). I consider reason-giving to be a parameter of deliberation in the broadest sense, in that many modes of communication—acts that "depart rather substantially from ideal, rational discourse"—are both useful to the deliberative process and can contribute to the legitimacy of the decisions resulting from deliberation (Wahl and White, pg. 495). Therefore, when assessing the "best" reasons for a proposal, I consider what is "best" to be malleable, including what is most just, practical, or equitable (Ţuţui, pg. 187–88).

Admittedly, not all theorists embrace the model of deliberation that I am imagining. This conception of reason is in contrast to Bohman who claims, "the call for more deliberation…is a demand for a more rational political order" (p. 2). Benhabib argues against "greeting, storytelling, and rhetoric" in deliberations as these communication practices do not live up to the standard of impartiality she sees as essential in deliberations. Her critique is tied to the standard of reasonings-giving in deliberation (p. 83). This instrumental view of deliberation requires that individuals be reasonable and make decisions rationally, which as Kim and Kim explain "is based on a set of optimistic but unrealistic assumptions" (p. 52).

Darrin Hicks, "The Promise(s) of Deliberative Democracy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2002): 223–60.

Rachel Wahl and Stephen K. White, "Deliberation, Accountability, and Legitimacy: A Case Study of Police-Community Forums," *Polity* 49, no. 4 (October 2017): 489–517, https://doi.org/10.1086/693919.

Viorel Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy: A Critical Analysis," *Argumentum: Journal the Seminar of Discursive Logic, Argumentation Theory & Rhetoric* 13, no. 2 (July 2015): 179–205.

James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy*. Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.

Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy." In *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, edited by Seyla Benhabib. Princeton University Press, 1996.

Joohan Kim and Eun Joo Kim, "Theorizing Dialogic Deliberation: Everyday Political Talk as Communicative Action and Dialogue," *Communication Theory* 18, no. 1 (February 1, 2008): 51–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00313.x.

[35] Murphy, "Romantic Democracy and the Rhetoric of Heroic Citizenship," 206.

[36] Kim and Kim, "Theorizing Dialogic Deliberation," 53.

[37] Livingston, "Avoiding Deliberative Democracy," 287.

[38] G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 48, no. 4 (2012): 198, https://doi.org/10.1080/00028533.2012.11821771.

[39] Livingston, "Avoiding Deliberative Democracy," 285–86.

[40] McDonald, "I Agree, but," 214.

[41] Gerard A. Hauser, "Civil Society and the Principle of the Public Sphere," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 31, no. 1 (January 1998): 37.

[42] William Keith and Paula Cossart argue "that historically the turn to public deliberative techniques" was driven by a "mismatch between the will of the public and government policies."

William Keith and Paula Cossart, "The Search for 'Real' Democracy: Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation in France and the United States, 1870–1940," in *Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation*, ed. Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen (Penn State University Press, 2012), 46, http://muse.jhu.edu/book/17918.

[43] Stithorn Thananithichot and Wichuda Satidporn, "Listening to the City: A Case of Democratic Deliberation," *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2011): 99.

[44] Kasper Møller Hansen, "Deliberative Democracy: Mapping out the Deliberative Turn in Democratic Theory," in *Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation*, ed. Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen (Penn State University Press, 2012), 17, http://muse.jhu.edu/book/1791817.

[45] McDonald, "I Agree, but," 199.

[46] Jane Mansbridge, "Using Power/Fighting Power." *Constellations* 1, no. 1 (December 1994): 57. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.1994.tb00004.x.

[47] McDonald, "I Agree, but," 201.

[48] Young, "Communication and the Other," 121.

[49] Kock and Villadsen, *Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation*, 63.

[50] Troy A. Murphy, "Deliberative Civic Education and Civil Society: A Consideration of Ideals and Actualities in Democracy and Communication Education.," *Communication Education* 53, no. 1 (January 2004): 84.

[51] Gerard A. Hauser and Chantal Benoit-Barne, "Reflections on Rhetoric, Deliberative Democracy, Civil Society, and Trust," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2002): 264, https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2002.0029.264.

[52] See Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen. "Rhetorical Citizenship: Studying the Discursive Crafting and Enactment of Citizenship." *Citizenship Studies* 21, no. 5 (2017): 570–86.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2017.1316360. and Keith and Cossart, "The Search for 'Real' Democracy."

See also "citizen deliberation:" Weiyu Zhang and Leanne Chang, "Perceived Speech Conditions and Disagreement of Everyday Talk: A Proceduralist Perspective of Citizen Deliberation," *Communication Theory (1050-3293)* 24, no. 2 (May 2014): 124–45.

[53] For example, Michael Middleton's work on people enduring homelessness suggests that public deliberation offers a means for homeless persons and marginalized communities to participate in politics, disrupt dominating discourses, and challenge problematic norms and assumptions through rhetorical agency.

Michael K. Middleton, "'SafeGround Sacramento' and Rhetorics of Substantive Citizenship," *Western Journal of Communication* 78, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 127–28.

[54] Laura W. Black and Anna Wiederhold, "Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups." *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 42, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 287. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2014.911938.

[55] Escobar, Oliver. "Public Dialogue and Deliberation: A Communication Perspective for Public Engagement Practitioners." *Edinburgh Beltane – Beacon for Public Engagement*, November 2011, 20.
https://eresearch.qmu.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/20.500.12289/2614/eResearch_2614.pdf?sequence=1. 20.

[56] Rob Anderson, Kenneth N. Cissna, and Meghan K. Clune, "The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue," *Communication Research Trends* 22, no. 1 (2003): 33.

[57] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, "The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue," 33.

[58] Examples include the Public Conversations Project, Study Circles, and the Public Dialogue Consortium.

W. Barnett Pearce and Kimberly A. Pearce, "Taking a Communication Perspective on Dialogue," In *Dialogue: Theorizing Difference in Communication Studies*, ed. Rob Anderson, Leslie A. Baxter, and Kenneth N. Cissna (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2004), 46.

[59] See Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, "The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue," 33; and Peter Levine, John Gastil, and Archon Fung, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," In *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. John Gastil and Peter Levine (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 282–83.

[60] NCDD Resource Center. "What Are Dialogue & Deliberation?" Blog. The National Coalition For Dialogue And Deliberation, June 11, 2010. http://ncdd.org/rc/what-are-dd/.

[61] Peter Levine, Archon Fung, and John W Gastil, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 1, no. 1 (2005): 8–9.

[62] Escobar, "Public Dialogue and Deliberation," 19.

[63] Levine, Fung, and Gastil, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," 8–9.

[64] John Gastil and Laura Black, "Public Deliberation as the Organizing Principle of Political Communication Research," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 4, no. 1 (December 14, 2007): 2, https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.59.

[65] Levine, Fung, and Gastil, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," 8–9.

[66] Christopher F. Karpowitz and Chad Raphael, *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums : Improving Equality and Publicity*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 85.

[67] These "[c]ivic forums include a wide variety of deliberating bodies, such as community policing initiatives (Fung, 2009; Karpowitz & Raphael, 2014), participatory budgeting (Avritzer, 2009), civic intergroup dialogue meetings (Walsh, 2004), and deliberative "mini-publics," such as Deliberative Polls and citizens' assemblies (Fung, 2003; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006; Grönlund, Bächtiger, & Setälä, 2014; Smith, 2009)."

Edana Beauvais and Andre Baechtiger, "Taking the Goals of Deliberation Seriously: A Differentiated View on Equality and Equity in Deliberative Designs and Processes," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 12, no. 2 (October 13, 2016): 1, https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.254.

[68] Kevin Mattson, "Do Americans Really Want Deliberative Democracy?," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 2 (June 1, 2002): 329, https://doi.org/10.1353/rap.2002.0037.

For example, as Wahl and White note, even in deliberations where there is a stark imbalance of power—such as the police and community member forums they studied—the communication and engagement in deliberative settings can still provide the possibility of improved treatment of marginalized folks as a consequences of engaging in the forum.

Wahl and Stephen K. White, "Deliberation, Accountability, and Legitimacy: A Case Study of Police-Community Forums," *Polity* 49, no. 4 (October 2017): 498, https://doi.org/10.1086/693919.

[69] Mansbridge, "Using Power/Fighting Power," 47.

Her definition, however, does not require that all interests and values be reconciled. The choice then for participants is to either leave things as is, or move forward with a solution that may not address the needs of all participants.

[70] Mary Boor Tonn critiques conversational models of dialogue for lacking a clear instrumental goal, therefore limiting outcomes to the catharsis of conversation, not substantive political change that acknowledges structural inequity.

Mari Boor Tonn, "Taking Conversation, Dialogue, and Therapy Public," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 412.

[71] Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard, *Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation.* New York: J. Wiley & Sons, 1998. 21.

[72] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, "The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue," 5–6.

[73] Escobar, "Public Dialogue and Deliberation," 20.

[74] Jennifer Duffield Hamilton and Caitlin Wills-Toker, "Reconceptualizing Dialogue in Environmental Public Participation," *Policy Studies Journal* 34, no. 4 (2006): 356, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2006.00200.x.

[75] Levine, Fung, and Gastil, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," 9.

[76] Black and Wiederhold, “Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups,” 287.

[77] Boor Tonn seems to place the dialogic approach to deliberation and highly procedural deliberative settings on opposite ends of the spectrum. This dichotomy seems unfair to me—civic conversation can seemingly include “ground rules for managing participation.” Heidelbaugh makes a similar critique of Tonn’s point.

Tonn, “Taking Conversation, Dialogue, and Therapy Public,” 423.

Heidlebaugh, “Invention and Public Dialogue: Lessons from Rhetorical Theories.,” 28.

[78] Escobar, “Public Dialogue and Deliberation,” 20.

[79] Levine, Gastil, and Fung, “Future Directions for Public Deliberation,” 282–83.

[80] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, “The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue,” 33.

[81] Kimberly A. Pearce, Shawn Spano, and W. Barnett Pearce, “The Multiple Faces of the Public Dialogue Consortium,” in *Routledge Handbook of Applied Communication Research*, edited by Lawrence R. Frey and Kenneth N. Cissna. New York: Routledge, 2009., 628.

[82] Black and Wiederhold, “Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups,” 287.

[83] Pearce, Spano, and Pearce, “The Multiple Faces of the Public Dialogue Consortium,” 628.

[84] Black and Wiederhold, “Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups,” 287.

[85] Escobar, “Public Dialogue and Deliberation,” 38.

[86] Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, 27.

[87] Bohman, 57.

[88] Levasseur and Carlin, “Egocentric Argument and the Public Sphere,” 409.

[89] Stephanie Burkhalter, John Gastil, and Todd Kelsha, “A Conceptual Definition and Theoretical Model of Public Deliberation in Small Face-to-Face Groups.” *Communication Theory* 12, no. 4 (November 2002): 409-411. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00276.x.

[90] Listening requires “active inquiry,” such as asking “encouraging, open-ended questions.” Participants practice empathy by allowing the other person to share personal narratives and experiences, which helps participants to see more clearly how their backgrounds and identities are different and how that shapes their perspective on a particular issue. Redefinition happens when participants embrace “alternative ways of speaking and knowing.”

Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw, 409–11.

[91] Kim and Kim, “Theorizing Dialogic Deliberation,” 53.

Kim and Kim suggest both instrumental deliberation and dialogic deliberation may exist simultaneously during a deliberative event, though they generally imagine instrumental deliberation existing in formal deliberative settings, and dialogic deliberation happening during quotidian interactions between citizens.

[92] Levine, Gastil, and Fung, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," 282–83.

[93] Black and Wiederhold, "Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups," 287.

[94] Heidlebaugh, "Invention and Public Dialogue: Lessons from Rhetorical Theories," 34–35.

Heidlebaugh offers a distinctly rhetorical approach to affecting change that focuses on finding new ways of thinking about and articulating public problems. The rhetorical act of invention is the central focus of public dialogue and results from the interaction of diverse perspectives in that dialogic space.

[95] Hamilton and Wills-Toker, "Reconceptualizing Dialogue in Environmental Public Participation," 762.

[96] Viorel Ţuţui, "The Epistemic Standards of Public Reason," *Argumentum: Journal the Seminar of Discursive Logic, Argumentation Theory & Rhetoric* 9 (January 2011): 174.

[97] Hamilton and Wills-Toker, "Reconceptualizing Dialogue in Environmental Public Participation," 756.

[98] Escobar, "Public Dialogue and Deliberation," 40.

[99] Not all scholars agree with my assessment that integrating deliberation and dialogue is useful. Mari Boor Tonn critiques the conversational model for democracy, arguing that it is unproductive because there is no explicitly stated goal and because it places responsibility for social problems and solutions on individuals, rather than on structures or institutions. She argues against a "therapeutic framing of social problems." Similarly, Scott Welsh argues against the notion of public deliberation as dialogue. He contends that characterizing public deliberation as dialogue does not adequately make clear that deliberative participants are political actors responsible for accounting for diversity and the heterogeneity of contemporary democracy.

Tonn, "Taking Conversation, Dialogue, and Therapy Public," 408.

Welsh, "Deliberative Democracy and the Rhetorical Production of Political Culture," 679.

[100] Ţuţui, "The Epistemic Standards of Public Reason," 182.

[101] Nelems, "What Is This Thing Called Empathy?," 19.

[102] Kenneth Cissna and Rob Anderson, "Public Dialogue and Intellectual History: Hearing Multiple Voices," In *Dialogue: Theorizing Difference in Communication Studies*, edited by Rob Anderson, Leslie Baxter, and Kenneth Cissna, 193–207. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2004, 202. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483328683.

[103] Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, 3.

[104] Welsh, "Deliberative Democracy and the Rhetorical Production of Political Culture," 679.

[105] Hicks, "The Promise(s) of Deliberative Democracy," 230; and Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy," 187–88.

[106] Gastil and Black, "Public Deliberation as the Organizing Principle of Political Communication Research," 3.

This opportunity does not necessarily mean each participant be allowed to speak for the same length of time, rather it is measured based on equal opportunity.

[107] This idea is what Ţuţui calls "*epistemic equality*": the equitable treatment of ideas from all participants.

Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy," 187–88.

[108] Gastil and Black, "Public Deliberation as the Organizing Principle of Political Communication Research," 3.

[109] Beauvais and Baechtiger, "Taking the Goals of Deliberation Seriously," 10.

[110] See Mark Button and Kevin Mattson, "Deliberative Democracy in Practice: Challenges and Prospects for Civic Deliberation," *Polity* 31, no. 4 (1999): 609–37, https://doi.org/10.2307/3235238.

[111] Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy," 187–88.

[112] Robert Asen, "Imagining in the Public Sphere," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35, no. 4 (2002): 345. https://doi.org/10.1353/par.2003.0006.

[113] Hicks, "The Promise(s) of Deliberative Democracy," 226.

[114] Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy," 187–88.

[115] Gastil and Black, "Public Deliberation as the Organizing Principle of Political Communication Research," 3.

[116] Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy," 187–88.

[117] Ţuţui, 187–88.

[118] Button and Mattson, "Deliberative Democracy in Practice," 609-37.

[119] Tatiana Tatarchevskiy, "Deliberation as Behavior in Public," In *Rhetorical Citizenship and Public Deliberation*, edited by Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012, 219 https://muse.jhu.edu/book/17918.

[120] Young, "Communication and the Other," 124.

[121] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56–80, https://doi.org/10.2307/466240.

[122] Ţuţui, "Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy," 204.

[123] Jason Hannan, "Moral Discourse Without Foundations: Habermas and MacIntyre on Rational Choice," *Communication Theory* 26, no. 1 (February 2016): 38.

[124] Jane Mansbridge, Janette Hartz-Karp, John Gastil, and Matthew Amengual, "Norms of Deliberation: An Inductive Study," *Journal of Deliberative Democracy* 2, no. 1 (May 1, 2020): 1-2. https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.35.

[125] Pearce, Spano, and Pearce, "The Multiple Faces of the Public Dialogue Consortium," 628.

[126] Black and Wiederhold, "Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups," 285–86.

[127] Escobar, "Public Dialogue and Deliberation," 22.

[128] Black and Wiederhold, "Discursive Strategies of Civil Disagreement in Public Dialogue Groups," 288.

[129] Hamilton and Wills-Toker, "Reconceptualizing Dialogue in Environmental Public Participation," 761.

[130] Pearce and Pearce, "Taking a Communication Perspective on Dialogue," 46.

[131] Hamilton and Wills-Toker, "Reconceptualizing Dialogue in Environmental Public Participation," 761.

[132] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, "The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue," 33.

[133] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, 6.

[134] Michael E. Morrell, "Empathy and Democratic Education," *Public Affairs Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (2007): 381. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40441496.

[135] Hansen, "Deliberative Democracy," 13–14.

[136] Waisanen's conception of deliberative discourse mirrors the practices of empathy. This overlap points to how empathy is a fitting way to address deliberation and dialogues' shortcomings. "Being deliberative" is an individual orientation in which a person remains open to adjusting their opinion and to others' communication. A deliberative orientation must account for human error and miscommunication and must embrace various fluid identities. It also requires understanding how the acts of speaking and listening can shift participants from wielding power to being subordinate.

Don Waisanen, "Toward Robust Public Engagement: The Value of *Deliberative* Discourse for *Civil* Communication," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17, no. 2 (June 1, 2014): 302-3. https://doi.org/10.14321/rhetpublaffa.17.2.0287.

[137] Lynne Cameron, *Metaphor and Reconciliation: The Discourse Dynamics of Empathy in Post-Conflict Conversations*, Routledge Studies in Linguistics 11, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 179.

[138] Hauser, "Civil Society and the Principle of the Public Sphere," 38.

[139] Waisanen, "Toward Robust Public Engagement," 309; and James S. Fishkin, *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33–34.

[140] Sara DeTurk, "Intercultural Empathy: Myth, Competency, or Possibility for Alliance Building?," *Communication Education* 50, no. 4 (October 2001): 374. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520109379262.

[141] Eric Leake, "Writing Pedagogies of Empathy: As Rhetoric and Disposition," *Composition Forum*, no. 34 (Summer 2016): 1. http://compositionforum.com/issue/34/empathy.php.

[142] Cameron, *Metaphor and Reconciliation*, 6-7.

[143] Eric Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," *Poroi* 14, no. 1 (May 24, 2018): 7. https://doi.org/10.13008/2151-2957.1265.

[144] Jamil Zaki and Kevin Ochsner, "Empathy," In *Handbook of Emotions*, edited by Lisa Feldman Barrett, Michael Lewis, and Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones, Fourth Edition (Guilford Press, 2018), 879, https://www.guilford.com/books/Handbook-of-Emotions/Barrett-Lewis-Haviland-Jones/9781462536368/contents.

[145] Earl Conteh-Morgan, “Peacebuilding and Human Security: A Constructivist Perspective,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 77. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41852073.

[146] Lisa Reber-Rider, “Building Cultures of Peace in the World: One Peace Center at a Time,” *International Journal on World Peace* 25, no. 1 (2008): 80. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20752817.

[147] William Eckhardt, “The Factor of Militarism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 2 (June 1969): 132. https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600204.

[148] Evita March, “How Empathy Can Make or Break a Troll,” *The Conversation*, July12, 2017, http://theconversation.com/how-empathy-can-make-or-break-a-troll-80680.

[149] M.V. Naidu, “Gandhian Humanism and Contemporary Crises,” *Peace Research* 21, no. 4 (1989): 50. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23609833.

[150] Thomas Weber, “Gandhian Philosophy, Conflict Resolution Theory and Practical Approaches to Negotiation,” *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 4 (2001): 509. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343301038004006.

[151] Naidu, “Gandhian Humanism,” 50.

[152] Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, “A Call for a Pedagogy of Empathy.” *Communication Education* 67, no. 4 (October 2, 2018): 496. https://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2018.1504977.

[153] Theresa Der-lan Yeh, “The Way to Peace: A Buddhist Perspective,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 11, no. 1 (2006): 93. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41852939.

[154] Joan Gamble and Catalina Ferrer, “Education in the Kindergarten: A Program for Peace,” *Peace Research* 21, no. 3 (1989): 20. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23609948.

[155] Bryan Byers and Timothy Jurkovak, “Peace Statement,” *International Journal on World Peace* 3, no. 3 (1986): 107. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20751046.

[156] Chad Posick, “Empathy on the Street: How Understanding between Police and Communities Makes Us Safer,” *The Conversation*, April 20, 2105, http://theconversation.com/empathy-on-the-street-how-understanding-between-police-and-communities-makes-us-safer-40041.

[157] M.V. Naidu, “A Proposal for a General Peace Theory,” *Peace Research* 28, no. 3 (1996): 3. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23607282.

[158] Byers and Jurkovak, “Peace Statement,” 107.

[159] Carl Rogers, *A Way of Being* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1995), 142–43.

[160] Susan Marie Lanzoni, *Empathy: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

[161] Susan Bandes, “Empathy, Narrative, and Victim Impact Statements,” *The University of Chicago Law Review* 63, no. 2 (1996): 379, https://doi.org/10.2307/1600234.

[162] Michael E. Morrell, *Empathy and Democracy: Feeling, Thinking, and Deliberation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 62.

[163] Rogers, *A Way of Being*, 142–43.

[164] Lynne Cameron, "Empathy in Talk: A Model and Some Methodological Considerations," *Living with Uncertainty: Working Paper 3*, January 25, 2011, 2. https://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/livingwithuncertainty/sites/www.open.ac.uk.researchprojects.livingwithuncertainty/files/pics/d127577.pdf.

[165] Sharon R. Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 210, Footnote 26.

She does add that while empathy is not a sentiment, "It is not especially misleading to refer to empathy as a sentiment, however, because the practice of empathy is always experienced in the form of feeling."

[166] See Robin Patric Clair, Rahul Rastogi, Ernest R. Blatchley, Rosalee A. Clawson, Charlotte Erdmann, and Seungyoon Lee "Extended Narrative Empathy: Poly-Narratives and the Practice of Open Defecation," *Communication Theory* 26, no. 4 (November 2016): 472; and Camilla Pagani, "Empathy, Complex Thinking and Their Interconnections," In *Exploring Empathy*, edited by Rebeccah Nelems and Nic Theo, (BRILL, 2017) 42. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004360846_005.

[167] Ann Jurecic, "Empathy and the Critic," *College English* 74, no. 1 (2011): 22. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23052371.

[168] Douglas N. Walton, *The Place of Emotion in Argument* (University Park, Pa: Penn State Press, 1992), 255.

[169] Dennis A. Lynch, "Rhetorics of Proximity: Empathy in Temple Grandin and Cornel West," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (January 1998): 19, https://doi.org/10.1080/02773949809391110.

[170] Lisa Blankenship, "Rhetorical Empathy in Dustin Lance Black's 8: A Play on (Marriage) Words," *Present Tense* 3, no. 1 (October 20, 2013): 1–7. https://www.presenttensejournal.org/volume-3/rhetorical-empathy-in-dustin-lance-blacks-8-a-play-on-marriage-words/.

See also: Kristie S. Fleckenstein, "Once Again with Feeling: Empathy in Deliberative Discourse," *JAC* 27, no. 3/4 (2007): 714. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20866807.

[171] William DeGenaro, "'Where Did All the White Girls Come From?' Difference and Critical Empathy In and Out of the Service Learning Classroom," *Open Words: Access and English Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 51. https://doi.org/10.37514/OPW-J.2014.8.1.04.

[172] Gila C. Parrella traces the history of the concept of empathy, considering the perspectives of figures such as Aristotle, Plato, Edmund Burke, and Adam Smith. She calls Aristotle's pathos "empathy's conceptual forerunner (pg. 204)." Adam Smith originally forwarded sympathy as a social idea capturing the way individuals conceptualize themselves as part of a larger community. He contened that seeing oneself as one among a collective prompts compassionate behavior (Zouboulakis pg. 53). Smith's considered "sympathy" to be the ideal moral sentiment, and as Robert C. Solomon explains, this concept incorporated a range of emotions, including what we would contemporaneously call empathy. Smith consistently referred to "fellow-feeling" as the defining characteristic of sympathy, or as Solomon explains, "feeling *with*" (pg. 7-8). Smith described an imaginative exercise: "we place ourselves in his [the other's] situation" (pg.

2). These descriptions mirror contemporary conceptions of empathy. For Smith, the sentiment of empathy ought to guide behavior in civil society.

Gilda C. Parrella, "Projection and Adoption: Toward a Clarification of the Concept of Empathy." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57, no. 2 (April 1971): 204–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637109383061.

Robert C. Solomon, "Free Enterprise, Sympathy and Virtue," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, September 14, 2006), 7, https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=927482.

Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Wells and Lilly, 1817), 2.

Michel S. Zouboulakis, "On the Social Nature of Rationality in Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill," *Cahiers d'économie Politique* n 49, no. 2 (December 1, 2005): 51–63. https://doi.org/10.3917/cep.049.0051.

[173] Steve Larocco, "Empathy as Orientation Rather than Feeling: Why Empathy Is Ethically Complex." In *Exploring Empathy*, edited by Rebeccah Nelems and Nic Theo, (BRILL, 2017): 6. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004360846_003.

[174] Gavin J. Fairbairn, "Reflecting on Empathy." In *Exploring Empathy*, edited by Rebeccah Nelems and Nic Theo, (BRILL, 2017): 70. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004360846_006.

Millions of listeners have viewed Brené Brown's talks discussing the differences between empathy and sympathy. She explains succinctly that "Empathy fuels connection. Sympathy drives disconnection."

Brené Brown on Empathy, YouTube, The RSA, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw.

[175] Amy Coplan, "Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up? A Case for a Narrow Conceptualization," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 49, September 2011): 44, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-6962.2011.00056.x.

[176] Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," 5.

[177] Cameron, *Metaphor and Reconciliation*, 175.

[178] This distinction is different from other rhetorical scholars' work on empathy. For example, Eric Leake names the "self-other overlap" as a necessary social condition of empathy. He defines this as the "recognition of a self-other overlap through a shared humanity, shared worthiness of concern, and shared potentialities and vulnerabilities" (pg.11). While my definition of expressed empathy may include similar outcomes, his definition relies on individuals seeing themselves being in the same situation as the other: "what happens to somebody else could happen to me or at least is relatable to me through some shared vulnerabilities" (pg. 17). Even as individuals may experience similar emotions with the other, they do not have to have similar experiences – in fact Coplan's definition demands an acknowledgement of individual and systemic differences in experience.

Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," 1-26.

[179] Leslie Jamison, *The Empathy Exams: Essays* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2014), 6.

[180] Daryl Koehn, *Rethinking Feminist Ethics: Care, Trust and Empathy* (London: Routledge, 1998), 57.

[181] Coplan, "Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up?," 46.

[182] C. Daniel Batson, "These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena," In *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, edited by Jean Decety and William Ickes (MIT Press, 2009), 4. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262012973.003.0002.

This conceptualization of empathy has roots in Adam's Smith's theory of sympathy, which requires us to "place ourselves in the other's situation and to work out what *to* feel, as though we were they." Stephen Darwall, "Empathy, Sympathy, Care." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 89, no. 2/3 (1998): 268. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4320822.

[183] Darwall, 269.

[184] Coplan, "Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up?," 58.

[185] Koehn's explanation of using imagination to empathize draws from what Diana T. Meyers calls "*broad empathy*."

Koehn, *Rethinking Feminist Ethics: Care, Trust and Empathy*, 58.

[186] Lynch, "Rhetorics of Proximity," 6.

[187] Cameron, *Metaphor and Reconciliation*, 181.

[188] Coplan, "Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up?," 54.

[189] DeGenaro, "'Where Did All the White Girls Come From?'," 49–63.

[190] Judy C. Wilson, "Service-Learning and the Development of Empathy in US College Students," *Education & Training; London* 53, no. 2/3 (January 1, 2011): 211, http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00400911111115735.

[191] Jay Mctighe and Grant Wiggins, "Understanding by Design® Framework," ASCD, 2011, 3. https://files.ascd.org/staticfiles/ascd/pdf/siteASCD/publications/UbD_WhitePaper0312.pdf.

[192] Kimberly Chabot Davis, "Oprah's Book Club and the Politics of Cross-Racial Empathy," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 403, https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877904047861.

Naomi Head defines this as "cognitive empathy" which "tends to refer to the cognitive projection of oneself into the shoes of another, whilst maintaining a clear differentiation between self and other." While as a rhetorical critic I am not concerned with what is happening inside the brain, this definition is useful for articulating the types of expressions an individual might make when empathizing.

Head, Naomi. "Transforming Conflict: Trust, Empathy, and Dialogue." *International Journal of Peace Studies* 17, no. 2 (2012): 41. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41853034.

[193] Amy Coplan, "Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects," In *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 16. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199539956.001.0001.

[194] Lynne N. Henderson, “Legality and Empathy,” *Michigan Law Review* 85, no. 7 (June 1987): 1584, https://doi.org/10.2307/1288933.

[195] Peiling Zhao, “Toward an Intersubjective Rhetoric of Empathy in Intercultural Communication: A Rereading of Morris Young’s *Minor Re/Visions*,” *Rhetoric Review* 31, no. 1 (January 2012): 65, https://doi.org/10.1080/07350198.2012.630959.

[196] Davis, “Oprah’s Book Club and the Politics of Cross-Racial Empathy,” 405.

[197] Cameron, *Metaphor and Reconciliation*, 8.

[198] Kenneth N. Cissna and Rob Anderson, “Theorizing about Dialogic Moments: The Buber-Rogers Position and Postmodern Themes,” *Communication Theory* 8, no. 1 (February 1998): 92, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1998.tb00211.x.

Their definition draws from the work of psychologist Carl Rogers and philosopher Martin Buber.

[199] Young, “Communication and the Other,” 127.

[200] Leake, “Writing Pedagogies of Empathy,” 1.

[201] Phoenix K. H. Mo and Neil S. Coulson, “Exploring the Communication of Social Support within Virtual Communities: A Content Analysis of Messages Posted to an Online HIV/AIDS Support Group,” *Cyberpsychology & Behavior* 11, no. 3 (June 2008): 373, https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2007.0118.

[202] Leake, “Writing Pedagogies of Empathy,” 1.

[203] Bloom, Paul. *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion*. London: Eco, 2016.

[204] Jesse Prinz, “Against Empathy,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 49, no. s1 (2011): 228. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-6962.2011.00069.x.

[205] Gregory R. Peterson, “Is My Feeling Your Pain Bad for Others? Empathy as Virtue Versus Empathy as Fixed Trait,” *Zygon®* 52, no. 1 (2017): 236. https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12330.

[206] Peterson, 234.

[207] Philemon Eva, “Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion by Paul Bloom. London, UK: Penguin, 2016.” *Psychotherapy and Politics International* 15, no. 2 (2017): 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1002/ppi.1418.

[208] Mary F. Scudder, “Beyond Empathy: Strategies and Ideals of Democratic Deliberation,” *Polity* 48, no. 4 (October 2016): 547. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41279-016-0001-9.

[209] Paul Heilker and Melanie Yergeau, “Autism and Rhetoric,” *College English* 73, no. 5 (2011): 485–97. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23052337.

[210] Melissa Chapple, Philip Davis, Josie Billington, Joe Anthony Myrick, Cassie Ruddock, and Rhiannon Corcoran, “Overcoming the Double Empathy Problem Within Pairs of Autistic and Non-Autistic Adults Through the Contemplation of Serious Literature,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (July 27, 2021): 708375. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.708375.

[211] Paul Antze, “On the Pragmatics of Empathy in the Neurodiversity Movement,” In *Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action*, 1st ed., edited by Michael Lambek, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010): 310–27.

[212] Heilker and Yergeau, “Autism and Rhetoric,” 496.

[213] See: W.E.B DuBois on double consciousness and Dickson D. Bruce, “W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness,” *American Literature* 64, no. 2 (1992): 299–309, https://doi.org/10.2307/2927837.

[214] DeTurk, “Intercultural Empathy,” 374.

[215] Adam D. Galinsky, Gillian Ku, and Cynthia S. Wang, “Perspective-Taking and Self-Other Overlap: Fostering Social Bonds and Facilitating Social Coordination,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 8, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 111, https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430205051060.

[216] C. Daniel Batson et al., “Empathy, Attitudes, and Action: Can Feeling for a Member of a Stigmatized Group Motivate One to Help the Group?,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28, no. 12 (December 2002): 1657, https://doi.org/10.1177/014616702237647.

[217] Batson et al., 1666.

[218] Davis, “Oprah’s Book Club and the Politics of Cross-Racial Empathy,” 405.

[219] Coplan, “Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up?,” 56-57.

[220] Lynch, “Rhetorics of Proximity,” 9.

It is worth noting that Lynch points out these dangers in order to demonstrate empathy as “rhetorically productive” (pg. 7).

[221] Lynch, 10.

[222] Coplan, “Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up?,” 58–59.

[223] Nelems, “What Is This Thing Called Empathy?,” 29.

[224] Nelems differentiates passive empathy from and transformative empathy.

[225] Nelems, 29.

For example, Fairbain writes that empathy “is about the attempt imaginatively to inhabit the other’s world as if we were them, in other words to understand, to experience, and to feel things as the other person might feel them.” There are problematic implications of “inhabiting” another individual’s space – even imaginatively. Fairbairn, “Reflecting On Empathy.,” 68.

“When we desire to step into the shoes of someone else, under the usual conceptions of empathy I have been using, it is only possible if those shoes are empty; this desire makes empathy dependent on the physical, bodily displacement of the other. It assumes, in an odd way, that I will only be able to learn something about you once you are gone, out of sight, as though your bodily presence were just a distraction to the rhetorical task at hand.”

Lynch, “Rhetorics of Proximity,”10.

[226] Hauser and Benoit-Barne, “Reflections on Rhetoric, Deliberative Democracy, Civil Society, and Trust,” 262.

[227] Robert L. Ivie, “Democratic Deliberation in a Rhetorical Republic.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 4 (November 1998): 502. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639809384234.

[228] Dana S. Kaminstein, "Persuasion in a Toxic Community: Rhetorical Aspects of Public Meetings," *Human Organization* 55, no. 4 (1996): 458. https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.55.4.f08081n88554tl17.

[229] McDonald, "I Agree, but," 201.

[230] Karpowitz and Raphael, *Deliberation, Democracy, and Civic Forums*, 67.

[231] Levine, Fung, and Gastil, "Future Directions for Public Deliberation," 2.

[232] Windy Lawrence and Benjamin Bates, "Mommy Groups as Sites for Deliberation in Everyday Speech," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 10, no. 2 (December 10, 2014): 1, https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.209.

[233] Christian Kock, "For Deliberative Disagreement: Its Venues, Varieties and Values," *Paradigmi*, no. 3 (2018): 483, https://doi.org/10.30460/91903.

[234] Cissna and Anderson, "Public Dialogue and Intellectual History," 202.

[235] Anderson, Cissna, and Clune, "The Rhetoric of Public Dialogue," 7.

[236] Lawrence and Bates, "Mommy Groups as Sites for Deliberation in Everyday Speech," 3.

[237] Asen, "Imagining in the Public Sphere," 347-8.

[238] Asen, 351.

[239] Goodnight suggests that communities come together due to exigences. He argues that public spheres are constituted and dissolved according to the rhetorical exigence and situational context. Goodnight, "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation."

[240] Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," 3.

[241] Lynch, "Rhetorics of Proximity," 20.

[242] Celeste Condit, "Rhetorical Criticism and Audiences: The Extremes of McGee and Leff," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54, no. 3 (December 1, 1990): 332, https://doi.org/10.1080/10570319009374346.

[243] Michael Leff and Andrew Sachs, "Words the Most like Things: Iconicity and the Rhetorical Text," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54, no. 3 (December 1, 1990): 256, https://doi.org/10.1080/10570319009374342.

[244] Leff and Sachs, 255.

[245] Leff and Sachs, 256–57.

[246] James F. Klumpp and Thomas A. Hollihan, "Rhetorical Criticism as Moral Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, no. 1 (February 1989): 88. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638909383863.

[247] Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," 23.

[248] Leake, 3.

[249] Leff and Sachs, "Words the Most like Things," 256.

[250] Leff and Sachs, 255.

[251] Leff and Sachs, 258.

[252] Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," 5.

[253] Fleckenstein, "Once Again with Feeling," 706.

[254] Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, 7.

[255] Cameron, *Metaphor and Reconciliation*, 24.

[256] Elizabeth S. Sink, Laura Black, and Martin Carcasson. "Communication Studies and Deliberative Democracy: Current Contributions and Future Possibilities." *Journal of Deliberative Democracy* 6, no. 1 (May 1, 2020), 11-12. https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.96.

[257] Carcasson, Black, and Sink, 15–16.

[258] Leake, "'Should You Encounter' The Social Conditions of Empathy," 6.

[259] Paul Anderson and Sara Konrath, "'Why Should We Care?'—What to Do About Declining Student Empathy," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 31, 2011, https://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-Should-We-Care-What/128420.

[260] Diana C. Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 150.

[261] Tonn, "Taking Conversation, Dialogue, and Therapy Public," 411.

[262] Christian Kock and Lisa Villadsen, "Rhetorical Citizenship: Studying the Discursive Crafting and Enactment of Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 21, no. 5 (2017): 583, https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2017.1316360.

[263] Hauser and Benoit-Barne, "Reflections on Rhetoric, Deliberative Democracy, Civil Society, and Trust," 272.

[264] Special Collections & University Archives, "Citizens Interracial Committee | SDSU Library," San Diego State University Library, accessed October 28, 2019, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#tapes.

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Chapter 1: Empathy Without Accountability: Second- versus Third-Person Expressed Empathy in the Citizens Interracial Committee Dialogues

"Education will not cure all the problems of society, but without it no cure for any problem is possible."

President Lyndon B. Johnson, "Remarks of the President to the Delegates of the White House Conference on Education," July 21, 1965[1]

Johnson's quote epitomized his position that education was an essential element in achieving racial equality in the United States.[2] Education fit into the larger civil rights landscape of the 1950s and 60s. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court decided the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case ruling against the notion of separate-but-equal to end "state-sponsored racial segregation of America's public schools."[3] Amidst civil rights activism to eliminate Jim Crow, education emerged as one arena of legislative change. This activism "ultimately stirred Congress, which approved the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Congress also passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965."[4] The Civil Rights Act sought to dismantle Jim Crow laws, including cutting federal funding from school districts perpetuating *de jure* segregation.[5] The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—which President Johnson signed into law on April 11 surrounded by a few of his former Mexican American students[6]—was described as the "the most far-reaching Federal legislation affecting education ever passed by Congress."[7] A large portion of ESEA funding was designated specifically for compensatory education as a part of Johnson's Great Society antipoverty initiatives.[8] The ESEA was enacted to specifically address education

inequalities in the United State's poorest regions. The ESEA funded additional programming in schools targeted toward underprivileged children, though reports from its early implementation cited mismanagement of funds, rather than direct targeting for low-income schools and at-risk children.[9]

The ESEA included five titles. Title I provided over one billion dollars to schools educating children living in poverty, which have since been commonly referred to as Title I schools.[10] Title III: Supplemental Education Centers and Services provided 100 million dollars specifically for the creation of educational centers acting as supplementary education support.[11] Title III earmarked funding for projects and educational services such as remedial tutoring, counseling, mental health, and social work. It specified that funding should be used for programming "during periods when schools are not regularly in session," such as summer or afterschool. Title III also suggested that the funding could be used to develop "model or exemplary education programs designed to encourage the adoption of improved or new educational programs."[12] While a wide range of services were permitted under Title III, school leaders were "required to cooperate with other educational and cultural interests in the community."[13] This funding was predominant in the discussions of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and summer support for Latinx students analyzed in this chapter.

San Diego and the Civil Rights Movement

San Diego's racial politics and civil rights progress followed trends elsewhere in the United States. The 1930s in San Diego mirrored racial violence in other parts of the country as the KKK and other white supremacist groups terrorized Mexican migrants, through lynchings and other violent and murderous acts.[14] As the twentieth century unfolded, the city's minority residents saw tensions between progressive legislation and lived realities of inequality. The end

of the 1950s included major overhauls to the state's civil rights legislation in California, including the Fair Employment Protection Act, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, and the Hawkins Act. Then in 1963, the California Fair Housing Act was passed by state legislators. Despite progress in the state, the 1960s in San Diego reflected the racism that existed elsewhere around the country including discrimination against African-Americans trying to obtain bank loans, fair housing, quality jobs, and access to business establishments.[15] San Diego in that era demonstrated stark discrepancies in power between white Americans who held social and institutional positions of power and Mexican Americans who were derided and experienced systemic discrimination.[16] White San Diegans expressed disbelief that the city could be considered a racist place or that minorities were not offered the same opportunities in seeking jobs, housing, or education, despite strong evidence to the contrary.[17]

These disparities were exacerbated by rapid population growth. In the thirty years between 1940 and 1970, San Diego's population went from 203,341 to 693,931 as the population grew threefold. The "nonwhite" population in the city "included African Americans and persons of Chinese, Japanese and Filipino ancestry," while the Census counted the Latinx population as "white," despite the institutional and social discrimination they endured in the city.[18] The 1965 Immigration Act changed federal law and allowed for more immigrants to enter the United States from Mexico. And, as a result, the population of Mexican migrants in San Diego increased significantly.[19]

The Chicano movement flourished in San Diego in the post-civil rights era as Mexican Americans began to build ideological community and identify as Chicana and Chicano.[20] However, building ideological community was not easy. Many Mexican American youth did not have an interest in or feel a connection to Mexico. Chicano/a/x activists worked to develop a

sense of community between the children and grandchildren of Mexican immigrants and more recent migrants by "emphasizing shared histories, families, communities, and cultural practices."[21] In San Diego, the Chicano movement led to calls for Chicano Power and the establishment of local chapters of the Brown Berets in the city:[22] "Chicanismo focused on the conception of a racialized community (la raza/'the people') that would serve as a strategic rallying point (carnalismo, or brotherhood) for a unified antiracist movement. Conceiving of themselves as a part of a 'mestizo nation' within the United States, Chicano/a students and activists emphasized a right to self-determination."[23] Despite efforts celebrating cultural and ethnic heritage, San Diegans endured continued inequality across the housing, economic, and educational sectors.

San Diego's Educational Landscape

In the years immediately following *Brown v. Board of Education*, people in San Diego dismissed the ruling as irrelevant to their city school district, imagining that segregation and educational inequality along racial lines was not a concern for the city.[24] However, tracking—a common practice for skirting desegregation——placed minority students in separate classes from white students based on biased standardized tests.[25] This practice was used in San Diego to segregate Latinx and Black students.[26] A decade later, the San Diego League of Women Voters report titled, "Dimensions of Discrimination," published in 1965, identified that racial minorities, specifically Black Americans and Latinxs, were concentrated in schools in the southeastern part of the city that were some of the poorest performing schools in the district.[27]

According to data collected in October of that same year, the city of San Diego's population was ten percent Black and another ten percent were considered Mexican American. During the 1965-66 school year, the San Diego Unified School District was characterized by

segregation along racial lines: 73.3 percent of African American children were enrolled in majority-Black schools and 88.7 percent of white children went to schools where 90 to 100 percent of the students were also white.[28] As a result of this data, the San Diego Unified School District Board of Education established the Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities, chaired by Judge Byron Lindsley, to evaluate "the opportunity available to children from racial or ethnic minorities" and to create suggestions for future action the Board could take to minimize educational inequity.[29]

The 1966 report created by the Committee argued that there was a significant problem in the district of "racial/ethnic imbalance" that was "detrimental to the education of all children." The Committee suggested 39 changes to the Board; 23 proposals were designed to address educational inequities facing minority children in segregated schools and the remaining policies would lessen the degree of segregation in the district.[30] In the year following the report, the San Diego Board of Education moved forward with 24 of the 39 recommendations, though effective implementation of these recommendations was not clearly apparent in many cases.[31] Recommendation 25—which suggested that "textbooks used should depict minority groups in undistorted or non-stereotyped roles"[32]—was a topic of discussion for the Citizens Interracial Committee (CIC), an organization that hosted community dialogues on racial tensions and local concerns, suggesting that the report shaped educational conversations in the city in subsequent years.

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs were a central part of ESEA initiatives in California. According to the "Evaluation of ESEA Title I Projects of California Schools, Annual Report 1967-1968," ESL programs were developed "to provide vocabulary development, language patterns, ideas, concepts, experiences, and opportunities to develop skills in listening,

hearing with understanding, and speaking."[33] These programs were at the center of the CIC education dialogues analyzed in this chapter as participants challenged the programs' implementation and ability to adequately address the needs of Latinx students. In May 1967, the year before the CIC dialogues selected for this case study, San Diego University hosted the Trends Conference on the Education of the Mexican-American. According to a conversation during a panel titled, "English as a Second Language and Curriculum Innovations," the San Diego School District had 400 bilingual teachers out of 8,000 total teachers or a ratio of one Spanish-speaking teacher per 100 Spanish-speaking children in the schools.[34]

The Inner City Project was also a central topic of conversation for the CIC. This program was established in the San Diego City Schools during the 1968-1969 school year—the school year following the CIC dialogues analyzed in this chapter—as part of Title III of the ESEA. One major goal of the program was to "provide English-as-a-Second-Language at all grade levels, and to provide programs in bilingual instruction in mathematics and language-arts at the junior high school level."[35] According to a report evaluating the Program two years later, the Inner City Program chose seven schools isolated by highways on four sides for participation in the project. These schools had the largest number of non-English speaking students in the city. Five elementary schools in San Diego Unified School District Elementary Zone 7 were selected: Burbank, Crockett, Logan, Lowell, and Sherman. Memorial Junior High School and San Diego Senior High School were the secondary schools selected. Maps demarcating the Inner City Program boundaries show the region as south of U.S. 80 (later Interstate 8) to the San Diego Bay.[36] Today, this region is called the Southeastern San Diego Community[37] and includes "the heart of San Diego's Mexican American community," Barrio Logan.[38]

San Diego's Approach to Racial Inequality: Citizens Interracial Committee

The CIC was established in 1963 in San Diego to manage growing racial tension by hosting community dialogues. These dialogues acted as a mechanism for illuminating and responding to racial concerns in the city. CIC Executive Director and dialogue moderator, Carroll Waymon explained the CIC was created "because San Diego was a white, bigoted city," or as he once analogized—the "Mississippi of the West."[39] The San Diego Council of Churches recommended the creation of the CIC as a means for finding "peaceful solutions" to "problems arising from allegations of discrimination in housing, employment, and education."[40] The CIC formed after Mayor Frank Curran and Councilman Jack Walsh unsuccessfully proposed the creation of a Human Relations Commission, a measure rejected by city council. The CIC was an unofficial response to that failed proposal.[41] The group met every other Friday from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and was—in Waymon's words—"a major effort to get people of all races, colors, and creeds together with City and County governmental officials."[42] According to an article published in the *Los Angeles Times* on the day of the CIC's first meeting on August 7, 1963, concerns were raised by mostly African American members of the community. The CIC was set to address "a backlog of complaints" according to the sitting mayor, Charles Dail. The *Times* quoted Dail saying, "Although the committee will have no legal sanction, it is expected to exert considerable moral persuasion by influential unity leaders to correct inequities."[43] As an independent agency, the CIC received city government support, but did not act as a city department or commission.[44] The CIC staff of 19 worked to create antidiscrimination programs and laws.[45] The CIC not only contributed to conversations about racism, but the dialogues also prompted the city's newspapers to cover issues of race more frequently, frankly, and in greater detail.[46]

In 1967, the CIC requested additional financing from the San Diego City Council to supplement their allocated budget. Their appeal argued that the CIC "relaxed racial tensions and prevented eruption of incidents such as have occurred in other urban areas."[47] David H. Thompson, a lawyer who served as the President of the CIC Board of Trustees in 1966, credited the CIC with quieting civil unrest: "There has not been one serious instance of civil rights picketing or demonstrations" in the city since the creation of the CIC three years prior.[48] Superior Court Judge Alpha Montgomery similarly credited the CIC with managing tensions in San Diego during the 1965 Watts riot and similar demonstrations.[49] Still, the *San Diego Union* reported that in the week after the Watts riots in Los Angeles, "Racial violence flared" in San Diego in a predominantly Black neighborhood, resulting in injuries and arrests.[50]

Waymon became the head of the CIC in 1967. Waymon, who had Master's degrees in both Education and Psychology, moved to San Diego from Los Angeles after the San Diego City Council sought his help in evaluating racial injustice in the city. In Los Angeles, he worked for the Human Relations Agency, a role similar to his responsibilities as the CIC Executive Director. In his role with the CIC, he led more than forty dialogues as the CIC Chair and helped advance many of the CIC's successes in mitigating discriminatory practices in the city. Throughout his career he was considered a champion of education.[51] After serving as the Executive Director of the CIC, he founded the Black History Department (now the Africana Studies Department) at San Diego State College.[52] Waymon was described by Colonel Leon H. Washington in his column "Wash's Wash" as "without a doubt one of the most active, effective voices of the city in its efforts to improve better racial harmony."[53]

In the year following Waymon's acceptance of the CIC position, he expressed continued optimism about the CIC dialogues. A *Los Angeles Times* article spotlighting the CIC's work

quoted Waymon explaining: “The purpose of these meetings is to bring feelings and attitudes to public officials...to bring a new sense of urgency. This is what happened today. It was beautiful.” However, some participants such as “Joe Vinson, chairman of the San Diego Black Conference, a Black Power group, complained that the biweekly dialogs were ‘rehashing old problems...instead of thinking in terms of long range problems.’” Still, Vinson credited the CIC for even tackling issues of racial discrimination: “When you decide to launch a program against racism you have gone one step farther than anyone else in America.”[54]

In a retrospective article published in the *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, Waymon described the CIC biweekly meetings as “heated” and “hot.” When describing the CIC’s mission, he reflected: “We tried to sensitize public officials to feelings of ordinary people.” But the agency struggled to get the attention of the individuals in power: “Once we identified the problems, the powers that be—and that wasn’t just city officials—not only denied the existence of racism and sexism, they denied the very possibility of the existence of such problems,” according to Waymon.[55] Reporting on the CIC in 1968 stated that “Negroes and Mexican-Americans attending have included militants who haven’t hesitated to castigate practices they felt contributed to racism in San Diego.” Waymon said that the issues raised during the dialogues were surprising to some city officials[56] and that CIC “rubbed some people the wrong way.” He suggested that the reason for the eventual cut in funding streams from both the city and county was a result of the CIC being “too effective.”[57]

CIC Community Dialogue Tapes

This chapter assembles the audio from four CIC community dialogues from June 1968 through the end of the year that focused on education, particularly ESL programs and Latinx student experiences.[58] I selected these four sessions because, together, they provide a complete

snapshot of the CIC conversations about education available in the San Diego State University digital archives. I used the archival notes to sort the available meeting recordings into broad topics. I then selected meetings focused on education because of personal interest in the subject, the opportunity to expand the discussion of civil rights era education in the West Coast, and because contemporary deliberations and dialogues about education continue to be heated conversations. The four selected meetings capture a coherent narrative about education in San Diego as addressed by the CIC dialogues.[59]

A typical CIC meeting lasted three hours and began with opening remarks from Waymon, followed by an hour for formal presentations from the San Diego Unified School District. The second hour was generally designated for community member responses. Typical participant responses included questions for the school representatives and longer reproofs of the District's efforts. The third hour either included additional presentations from the school personnel or continued time for participant questions and input. Waymon presided over the meetings, and both the community members and the District presenters looked to him as the leader of the sessions.

The CIC tapes I selected for this chapter were transcribed so I could analyze them. Although there were a few moments where tape quality was inaudible or crosstalk made it difficult to understand what was being said, these moments did not impact the overall clarity of the tapes' content. In order to identify who was speaking during the dialogues, I cross-referenced handwritten meeting minutes and names mentioned during the conversations.[60] I also used other archival documents to find the names of certain individuals participating in the dialogues analyzed in this chapter to figure out their roles in San Diego.

Participants referenced in this chapter include San Diego Superior Court Judge Byron Lindsley,[61] who participated in multiple CIC dialogues; Robert (Bob) E. Russell, who worked for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) based in San Diego;[62] and school teacher Larry Carlin, a member of the previously mentioned Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities.[63] Carlin, a white teacher, worked with ACLU attorney, William Gavin, to fight against the San Diego Unified School District over maintaining racial segregation.[64] In the year before the CIC dialogues analyzed in the case, Carlin and Gavin created a coalition of parents from white, Black, Latino, and East Asian families to challenge the district's plan for voluntary integration of the city's schools.[65] Another participant, Frank Sáiz worked for the Department of Urban Affairs at University of California, San Diego and was the Past President of the Mexican American Youth Association at San Diego State College.[66] Decades later, he acted as a facilitator for a panel titled, "Student Equity: Racism in the Educational System," for which Waymon was one of the panelists at the San Diego Community College District Personnel and Guidance Association First Annual Bi-National Spring Workshop hosted in 1994.[67] Estelle Chacon was a frequent participant in the CIC meetings as a vocal Mexican American community member. Her oral history about her participation in the National Women's Political Caucus, the Chicano Caucus, and the Democratic Convention during the summer of 1972 is included in the San Diego State University, Department of History, Special Collections and University Archives.[68] She later participated in feminist activism as the State Coordinator for NOW's Displaced Homemakers in the late 70s.[69]

Representatives from the San Diego School District named in the dialogues included George V. Hall (Dr. Hall), an Associate Superintendent who oversaw the implementation of the ESEA as the Overall Director for the Compensatory Education Programs. Norman W. Houser

was the Director of the Inner City Project, who was named in a tense discussion during the dialogue on the project, although he was not present.[70] Herbert Ibarra was the Project Director of the ESL Bilingual Center in San Diego and former Spanish teacher in both junior and senior high schools. He also taught Spanish in junior college. According to his bio accompanying an article published in the journal *Foreign Language Annals*, Ibarra "has published guidelines on teaching of Spanish in the secondary schools and on teaching English as a Second Language in San Diego City Schools. He is the founding President of the Association of Mexican-American Educators, San Diego Chapter."[71] Ibarra Elementary School in the San Diego Unified School District was named after him when it opened in 2005 to honor his legacy as the "the first Latino principal in the century-old San Diego Unified School District." He served as the principal at two of the schools named in the Inner City Project: Memorial Junior High School and San Diego High School.[72]

This chapter proceeds in three stages. First, I define Waymon's facilitation style using examples from the selected dialogues to argue his approach to facilitation and the structure of the CIC meetings limited opportunities for expressed empathy. Next, I examine moments of expressed empathy to distinguish between two distinct types of empathy I term *second*- and *third-person expressed empathy*. Finally, I discuss the implications of dialogues that prioritize third-person empathy over second-person expressions, identifying differences in accountability, community attendance, dialogue structure, and vulnerability.

Defining Waymon's Facilitation Style: Process Talk

To make sense of Waymon's facilitation style, I turn to Kara Dillard's categorization of facilitator types. Facilitators act as the moderator for discussions and there are a range of

approaches. Dillard delineates three different types of facilitators based on D.M. Ryfe's continuum for facilitators: passive, moderate, and involved.[73]

The passive facilitator directs traffic, acting as the "turn-taking enforcer," managing time limits and speaking order. The passive facilitator is "hands-off," reading rather than interpreting prepared materials and rarely models discursive strategies. Passive facilitators predominantly use process talk and clearly identify themselves as "ideologically passive." Process talk is language that establishes the rules and procedures for the dialogue or deliberation. The result of this style of facilitation is that the group is less likely to have a clear and specific direction for the conversation and that the facilitator has little agency to shape the conversation beyond governing turn-taking.[74] As a result, the facilitator is does not help participants see connections being made during the course of the dialogue as it relates to the goal of the deliberation and the resulting conversation remains abstract.[75]

The moderate facilitator acts as the "designated driver," by following the group's interpretation of the topic and inviting group members to respond to provided materials or resources. The facilitator will take time to "clarify" or redirect the conversation before handing the conversation back to the group. The moderate facilitator may use strategies such as "modeling, framing, or storytelling" to get the group back on topic but do so infrequently. Moderate facilitators are "tangential to but a part of the deliberation." Moderate facilitators tend to share responsibilities with participants, intervening periodically, but generally allowing for a free-flowing discussion. Moderate facilitators rely on elicitation as a central strategy for facilitation because it turns the discussion back to participants with a question to reflect and respond to. In terms of speaking, moderate facilitators at times talk less the passive facilitators.

Their interjections focus more on getting participants to engage in deeper thinking by continually turning power back to the group.[76]

The involved facilitator "heavily editorializes or interprets the topic" throughout the conversation and regularly intervenes to ask clarifying questions and prompt further discussion. The involved facilitator uses framing talk, leading "the discussion by continually reframing or suggesting alternate ways to problematize the issue." When reiterating the groups ideas, the involved facilitator uses "value-laden language and interpretation" to prompt participants to think about consequences and perspectives the facilitator brought to the deliberation. The facilitator is likely to model the type of language and points of view they hope are used in the conversation.[77]

Involved facilitators make clear the purpose of a deliberative forum, emphasizing the importance of participation and reaching the designated outcomes for the session. They tend to help groups move more quickly to the desired outcome by using "value-laden language." Involved facilitators highlight tensions between competing values in the discussion so that participants can unpack that tension and find ways to link off-topic comments back to the central them. Summarizing and asking probing questions are essential strategies of involved facilitators. They also insert new values into the conversation, through reframing or acting as devil's advocate to generate conflict that might prompt additional or deeper discussion, though participants may not accept or take-up facilitator-initiated ideas.[78]

Waymon primarily facilitated using process talk, enacting the "turn-taking enforcer" model of facilitation. He focused on handling the order of who would speak during the CIC meetings and monitoring time. For example, Waymon managed multiple participants who wanted to share their opinions: "Edison, you're on now, your hand's been up a long time.

Anderson, Burt, Larry, the gentleman over here and another hand over here, Mike, and go right on around in that order. And you got it."[79] His facilitation demonstrates the traffic-directing strategy Dillard identified. Waymon also provided timekeeping cues: "Okay, over here and then some of you better get in there because we're running out of time."[80] These two examples illustrate the style of much of Waymon's facilitation throughout the CIC dialogues. Both of these responsibilities as enacted by Waymon constitute passive facilitator involvement. While participants clearly deferred to Waymon as the chair of the meetings, he prioritized his responsibility to keep order during the dialogues and adopted a passive approach.[81]

This approach suggests Waymon acted as a "neutral" facilitator.[82] Using traffic-directing and timekeeping strategies, Waymon specified what should be addressed during the meetings. He would explicitly name the next topic to move the dialogue forward: "All right, so we then move on to counseling...before getting reports on that aspect, let's have Judge Lindsley then delineate for us the area only, if I may ask Judge, that deals with specifically the counseling, et cetera."[83] Waymon articulated what was to be addressed and who was responsible for speaking first, but did not offer any interpretation of the topic. This use of process talk further demonstrates Waymon's passive approach to facilitation.

Waymon used process talk as his facilitation approach to managing conflict, as well. For example, when tensions arose during a conversation about counseling services available for Latinx students, Waymon called for a break and reiterated the procedural requirements for the dialogue and the expectations for engaging in conflict:

> You have two minutes to enjoy. Let's relax for a couple minutes, take just a couple minute break. Don't leave the room and we'll get right back to it. After the break, we could feel more relaxed and try to clarify issues and ask questions that are meaningful so we can get some input in terms of meaningful replies. For those who are not used to the dialogue methods, may I suggest again that your attacks not be on the individual. If you wish to attack, attack on the issue, not the individual. This rule we must observe. I saw a

> hand behind me, but I saw one on my left. I'm going to start with the one on my left, Mike.[84]

He did not model what would constitute "meaningful replies" or reframe the conflict, following the largely "hands-off" style of a passive facilitator. His passive approach, however, did not prevent Waymon from intervening. Waymon offered participants a chance to breathe to diffuse a moment of tension. He also reinforced the manner in which participants were expected to engage and articulated who would get to respond next.

Waymon also relied on process talk when summarizing participant statements. Rather than interpret the comments of participants, he simply reflected what they said: "His concern about community relations. That is, what's happening in terms of educating the public. Now I want to finish that area unless we can go on with what Bob mentioned because that's really what Marta was bringing up too."[85] He summarized participants' statements as a strategy for enforcing turn-taking, not as a strategy for reframing issues or raising new problems.

The format of the CIC dialogues may have influenced Waymon's use of turn-taking. The meetings would often begin with formal presentations from school representatives. The other participants would then take turns sharing their reactions to these presentations after the school officials finished presenting. For example, in the August 2, 1968 meeting, Waymon began the session by explaining that Dr. George Hall, the Associate Superintendent of San Diego schools, would present before allowing the community members to respond:

> Let's go through the whole presentation of that part before we stop to ask questions, react, or what have you, and let's do it in terms of stopping him only for a question or clarification and the Chair [Waymon] will try to rule it that way. If you don't understand the point, obviously you would stop and try to get a point of clarification. But to react to what he's saying, I implore us to follow the rules that we've laid down allowing him the opportunity, whichever way he wishes to present it.[86]

This statement reveals that the rules for the meeting required the participants to suspend their responses, limiting the possibility for dynamic conversation to unfold. Waymon provided guidelines for the order in which the dialogue would proceed and the manner of communication deemed appropriate at that time, consistent with his traffic-enforcer role. Noticeably, participants were only allowed to interject if they needed clarification. Therefore, the dialogues began mostly one-directional, as participants were not expected or allowed to respond to material from the school personnel in real time.

By asking participants to bracket their responses—emotional or otherwise—the dialogues did not unfold as a conversation. Instead, the school representatives presented data and material in a relatively formal manner, while participants were expected to take in all of the information at once, before raising questions or comments. Interestingly, Waymon made comments suggesting the CIC participants agreed to this plan, despite some participants expressing the frustration with the format. These critics did not see the structure as a true dialogue. For example, Estelle Chacon complained: "But this is dialogue and the questions come up then. This is a speech. That is not dialogue. The questions come up as he [the school representative] relates. You cannot recall emotion and recall all that." Chacon pointed out the loss of emotional expression when community members' responses were delayed. A male community member interjected:

> Carroll [Waymon], I think we should add something in here. Each time school officials have come—Dr. Hall, he's always come prepared with a structured, prepared statement. Now, if he can't deviate from that particular structure and have a dialogue, this isn't a banquet where you're presenting in front of your groups of people certain facts. This is a dialogue. If you haven't come prepared to dialogue outside of a structured presentation, then, let's just forget it. Because, you're wasting our time.[87]

The community members were dissatisfied with the structure of the meetings and Waymon's enforcement of it.[88]

Although the participants critiqued Waymon for persistently adhering to the structure, he was upholding his responsibilities as the facilitator. The format was the agreed upon plan and the school officials expressed that they had come under the pretense that this format for the dialogue would be followed. Waymon acknowledged the value of hearing the participants' emotional responses, while emphasizing the importance of allowing Hall to present according to the stipulated structure: "Let Dr. Hall start and let's raise it [concerns] after the first presentation and then, as for this dialogue is set up, to bring these feelings out. If, at that time, after the first session has ended on that topic, you feel that you have any feelings about it, the feelings have to come out too....It's a delicate thing but it's real and we're going to have to face it, it seems to me."[89] Waymon recognized community members would raise legitimate concerns and that the meeting's purpose was the make the members' feelings known. But he maintained that the format required participants to wait to share their opinions. In another meeting he explained: "On that, I would say that I cannot recognize anyone yet to react to that unless it's completely absolutely got-to-say-something. Because we have to call on and recognize Mr. Rindone, for example, from the Sweetwater School District...So if we can hold up reactions right now."[90] Throughout the dialogues, Waymon enforced turn-taking and asked participants to bracket their emotional reactions until the designated time for responses.

The dialogue's format and Waymon's use of process talk to enforce it resulted in few moments of expressed empathy. Statements like: "Order please, so we can hear. Don't react yet. I know how you feel but don't react"[91] demonstrate how Waymon quieted community members and suspended their emotional responses to maintain the rules of the dialogue. Waymon

recognized that the moments when participants engaged dialogue were “very beneficial, fruitful” in raising concerns, but consistently upheld the rule that participants listen to school personnel before dialoguing.[92] The absence of expressed empathy throughout most of the conversations suggests the CIC dialogue model limited the possibility for individuals to express shared emotions, use language that acknowledged or imagined the other’s experience, or articulate a recognition of difference between self and other.

Identifying Moments of Expressed Empathy

Although the typical format of the CIC dialogues limited the possibility for empathy, *expressed empathy* emerged in the dialogue when Waymon intervened and reframed the interactions to prioritize storytelling. Language that acknowledged or imagined the other’s experience was the principle indicator of the moments of *emergent empathy*. The moments of *emergent empathy* did not include expressions of shared emotion or recognition of self-other differentiation.

At the start of the July 12, 1968 meeting, Waymon began by suggesting it ideally would be different from previous meetings that got bogged down by data reports. He maintained the typical format of a formal presentation followed by dialogue, but he asked the presenters from the school district to avoid going through statistics: “We went over statistics last time, a lot of statistics. I really don’t think they’re too necessary now...I urge you to get away from these statistics...Therefore, we don’t get hung up in where we were last week and the week before, on numbers and statistics.”[93] Ward Donley, the Director of Special Projects of the Title I program, did not follow Waymon’s recommendation and proceeded to go through the data in the report. Waymon interrupted Donley to suggest that Donley stop reciting the data: “I might add one suggestion to you in terms of reporting it. Instead of going down there, if you wanted to simply

refer to it as you make interpretations of it, maybe it'll be better then...I have a hunch that the figures don't mean that much to the people around, as I'm watching their expressions." The participants' lack of understanding prompted Waymon to intervene. This moment of facilitation was unique because Waymon's intervention reshaped the type of communication that emerged during the dialogue.

Waymon asked Donley to provide context for the data rather than reciting numbers in the report, resulting in an expression of *emergent empathy*. Donley explained the dropout statistics using community context, pointing to unemployment, pregnancy, community norms, and the criminal justice system as reasons for the number of students who dropped out. In a moment of *emergent expressed empathy*, Donley engaged the statistics to imagine the students' experiences. He explained: "There's an underemployment factor here that I'm sure some of these youngsters they go to work, which accounts for the higher dropout rate there. Employment—we had a total of 85 youngsters who left school to take employment. I think this is partially tied-in with the economic factor of the family."[94] In order to interpret the dropout figures, Donley had to imagine the experience of others—in this case, the high school students in a largely Latinx community who were responsible for contributing to their families' incomes. Waymon's intervention called on Donley to tell the story behind the numbers. By reorienting the dialogue away from fact reporting toward storytelling to represent the data, Waymon facilitated an expression of empathy.

When the dialogue opened up, the storytelling—and imagining of another's experience—continued. In response to Donley's dropout data interpretations, another participant provided a different story about what the data showed: "I think we have to get away from placing the responsibility solely on the parent or for reasons of pregnancy or employment or whatever it is. I think that we have to face a reality here. That the student has been really alienated from the

schools and you've been alienated by the Anglo in those schools, by the counselors, by the teachers, the image, the self-concept that he has of himself." As Latinx students represented the largest portion of the dropouts, this participant considered the ways white norms in schools may have made the students who dropped out feel excluded from the school culture. His expression of empathy imagined the students' reasons for leaving school to be driven by their experiences at the school, not family or socioeconomic strife. Both Donley and the community member used language that acknowledged and imagined the experience of Latinx student dropouts, but the stories they imagined were different.

Another community member responded to these competing expressions of empathy by agreeing with the other participant's imaginative work. He dismissed Donley's *emergent empathy*, which focused on the children's situation at home, as an excuse for shortcomings in the schools:

> In the early part of the meeting there was some discussions from the gentleman across the table here about these family conditions and whatnot that contribute to the high dropout rate in this particular school and the kids not being motivated and whatnot. And that's kind of traditional with a school system to point to external factors...And what the message is here is that your school system is the problem and if that isn't perceived, then you've missed the message. And I suggest that as long as the school system hides behind these external factors, I feel, as a rationale and justification for its failures, then school administrators haven't gotten the message.[95]

This community member challenged how Donley imagined the students' experiences and he supported the alternative expression of empathy that placed blame on the school district's white normative culture.

Second- vs. third-person expressed empathy

The competing expressions of empathy in the previous example demonstrate how empathy can be used strategically for different arguments. More importantly, this example

reveals that, in dialogues, *expressed empathy* may not always appear ***between*** participants as I anticipated when approaching this project. Additional theorizing of *expressed empathy* is necessary to make sense of the examples in the CIC community dialogues. In this case, the participants engaged in what I call *third-person expressed empathy*. *Third-person expressed empathy* is an expression of empathy for a third-person who is outside the room, or at the very least, outside the immediate dialogue conversation. The school official and community member expressed empathy for Latinx students, ***not*** one another. Empathy ***between*** participants (i.e. "I empathize with ***you***") is what I term *second-person expressed empathy*. The difference between these modes of *expressed empathy* is significant. In *second-person expressed empathy*, dialoguers express shared emotions, use language that acknowledges and imagines the other's experience, and articulate a recognition of difference between self and other with the person(s) with whom they are talking. However, with *third-person empathy* these expressions are about another person outside the speaking situation. Each of the tenets of *expressed empathy*—expressing shared emotions, language that imagines the other's experience, and the recognition of difference from the other—could be extended to someone not present for the dialogue. The distinction between *second-* and *third-person empathy* further delineates how empathy emerges in dialogues and deliberations.

Significantly, *third-person expressed empathy* allows for competing conceptions of the other to be articulated. If the person with whom I am empathizing is not actually a part of the conversation, I can imagine their emotions and perspective to be whatever I see as useful for my position. It is a persuasive tactic that allows me to articulate an imagined version of the other's experience and emotions *without* the accountability of the other responding to my version of their story. The expressions of empathy are therefore for an abstract other, rather than the person

who is right in front of me engaging in the dialogue. Which raises the question, what are the consequences of being able to tell any story I want? The CIC dialogues provide a case study for looking at the implications of *third-person expressed empathy* because the examples of expressed empathy were consistently third- rather than second-person.

Typically, expressions of empathy during the CIC dialogues were about students' experiences in school. For example, Mr. Carlin, a former teacher at Memorial Jr. High, provided testimony about his experience as an educator in which he expressed shared understanding of his former students' emotions and imagined how the situations he detailed must have been for them. His testimony demonstrates that storytelling was not the norm for community members responding to issues. He prefaced his story by justifying it as a way of making sense of his questions. He explained his experience working with Latinx students at Memorial on their math:

> But I was very much impressed, however, with the idea that these kids were being terribly frustrated—even though they might be getting English as a Second Language instruction or a short period of time of help with English—because for the other period of time during the school day and for the entire year, they were still in a classroom where the information and materials were being taught in English...And I know that many of the kids were psychologically hurt.[96]

While he did not explicitly express shared frustration with the students, he expressed an understanding of his students' experiences and their feelings.

Carlin also shared a story about a Black student named Gloria, who came to him in tears because she was removed from his English class and placed in a special education class. He recounted how this transfer happened without his consent or notification. School testing indicated that the student had a learning disability, so her counselor automatically moved her to a different class. Carlin explained how he followed up with the counselor: "Now when I approached the counselor, the counselor said, and I think that in all sincerity that he was really

doing the right thing that well, we'll retest her. But the point was that she was going to be retested after she had been transferred." Here he expressed his shared frustration with the student and understanding of her emotional distress. He also expressed empathy with the counselor by imagining his perspective. Carlin gave the counselor the benefit of the doubt that he was making a choice based on what he thought was best for the student.

Carlin's expression of empathy then extended to children in white schools: "And I'll also just throw-out, I taught much longer in middle-class Anglo segregated schools and I think that testing children in those schools was also very psychologically damaging, that when we segregate children on the basis of intelligence or so called intelligence." He imagined the trauma caused by testing-based tracking, expressing empathy for his former students. He used this expression of empathy to demonstrate the heightened risks for Latinx and Black communities, continuing, "That this too is damaging, it happens to be perhaps in fact, more so I'm sure because of these other dimensions when we talked in terms of the segregated Chicano school or Black school."[97] He imagined how being tracked into a class based on test scores would be even more emotionally and educationally devastating to students in the predominantly Latinx and Black schools. Carlin's expressions of empathy extended to others outside the dialogue: former students, the school counselor, and hypothetical students. But he did not use language that imagined the experiences or emotions of the people with whom he was dialoguing. Therefore, his expressions of empathy were entirely *third-person expressions*.

Similarly, Mr. Wingard, a district representative, who was described as an advocate for ESL, expressed empathy for Spanish speakers when he described the ridicule people speaking with accents endure: "Indeed, you probably have had acquaintance with people of Mexican descent whose English bore the marks of the Spanish language in terms of an accent or perhaps

in terms of the complexity of the language which they use and this sort of thing gets capitalized on in rather cruel ways in people like José Jiménez,[98] who makes a living out of imitating the stereotypes of the Mexican Americans speaking English."[99] He acknowledged the callousness people with accents experienced. However, this expression is another example of *third-person expressed empathy.* Wingard did not empathize directly with any of the Spanish speakers in the room. He imagined the experience of a third person—an imagined Spanish speaker—to support his case for additional ESL programming.

In the context of the dialogue, Wingard's expression of empathy was part of his argument that ESL programming should include students with accents. His argument rested on his imagined understanding of the ways speaking with an accent or the inability to speak English created social and educational disadvantages. He continued, articulating the experience of a student whose opportunities might be limited by the lack of access to ESL education:

> Because, for instance, a child who speaks English fluently, but, with a very strong accent of Spanish showing through his language. To me, this child needs special instruction. He cannot be mobile socially. His whole social and economic development as a child and as an adult is going to be depressed until he can speak standard English. So, this child needs special instruction. But, you see, many people would not conceive of this child as being one to count in as needing ESL. Some people might just say, "Well, that's a kid that doesn't speak a word of English."[100]

Wingard argued students with accents were overlooked based on how teachers and administrators identified which students qualified for ESL. He imagined their experiences to provide evidence in support of his argument for expanded ESL programming in the school district, claiming it was "the number one priority." His *third-person expressed empathy* operated as a persuasive tactic.

When community members were allowed to respond, however, Estelle Chacon suggested Wingard's concern about accents was problematic: "Now I think that if you make a big thing

about an accent, it will work in a negative way instead of a positive way. And it may be just treating them as persons and individuals and letting them keep their accent if they can't get rid of it."[101] Chacon used language that acknowledged the experience of students speaking with an accent to come to a different conclusion. She suggested that emphasizing the elimination of accents as a part of ESL curricula could create more stereotyping of and discrimination against those students whose accents remained.

Later, another participant expressed concern that ESL programs could whitewash the Mexican American students' culture:

> I even have a question in terms of the entire concept of ESL. I think it's, it seems to me, it's like an acceptable method of again stripping the Mexican American of his background, and his heritage by trying, by telling him you should learn English as a Second Language and forgetting to help him retain some of his cultural background, to help him retain some of the language, Spanish language.[102]

This participant challenged the cultural responsiveness of ESL programs. The community members' perspectives that ESL could escalate stereotypes, force assimilation, and erase Latinx culture, revealed how other stories could be told about the situation and demonstrated the shortcomings of *third-person expressed empath*y. Wingard advocated for expanding ESL by acknowledging the discrimination Spanish speakers faced. But his third-person expression of empathy lacked the accountability of empathizing with someone in the room who experienced that discrimination. Without those directly impacted—in this case, ESL students— present to respond to the expressions of empathy about their experiences, the empathizer can imagine their experience to be what is useful for their own position. Additionally, the framework for the CIC meetings required participants to wait to express concerns until the "dialogue" portion of the session, meaning any counter-narratives were not raised until well after Wingard's statement. As

a result, the different articulations of the Latinx students' experiences were disjointed, further limiting any accountability for third-person expressions of empathy.

The lack of accountability for *third-person expressed empathy* potentially undermines the epistemological goals of dialogue. During the June 7,1968 dialogue, the conversation considered the need for the CIC to explicitly prioritize Mexican American concerns. Estelle Chacon argued community members were "unaware that the Mexican American has had a problem." This conversation prompted one participant to declare her own ignorance prior to participation in the dialogues, crediting them with helping her to understand the experiences of Mexican Americans:

> I'd like to make a statement as a citizen. I never knew the Mexican Americans had a problem until I got involved with CIC dialogue. The fact is that you can blend into society and you're not very noticeable. If you speak English without an accent, I don't even know you're Mexican American! Now, if it wasn't for CIC, I never would have heard anything about it…I know personally, I know of a Mexican American—I even have friends who are Mexican Americans and I didn't know about it.[103]

This participant's testimony celebrated the CIC's success at raising the concerns of marginalized populations in the community. However, the pattern of third-person expressions of empathy may have limited the depth of her understanding. If the experiences shared about the Latinx community were all expressed through perspective-taking of an imagined other—such as Mexican American students absent from the dialogues—the stories from which this community member learned may have been uncontested or shallow accounts of actual Latinx experiences. Her testimony was a moment of emergent empathy as she articulated an understanding of the challenges that Latinx community members faced. But it too was a third-person expression of empathy. She talked about Mexican Americans as an imagined collective, rather than empathizing directly with Latinx participants, like Chacon, in the room.

These examples reveal the consequences of incomplete community representation in dialogue and deliberation settings. If the person or group most impacted by an issue—or the person or group most able to impact it—are not present, expressions of empathy are more likely to be third-person. A dialoguer cannot express second-person empathy if the person affected or the person able to make change is not there. For example, teacher Larry Carlin identified "white racism" as the root of many issues affecting the school district. He expressed third-person empathy by taking the perspective of white people oblivious to the problems the CIC discussed:

> I think we need to get into the white community and tell them what's happening to Mexican kids. And what a lousy ESL program is so far and problems with curriculum. And I can't believe that the majority of whites won't support, for example, an integrated teaching of history...we're talking about ESL and things that are in the community, I don't dig this as the whites are going to really not support that. I think that many will. But they don't know what's wrong. They're just as ignorant as I used to be I guess.[104]

Carlin used his personal experience to imagine why white community members were inattentive to the needs of Latinx students. He believed if the CIC made white people aware of the disparities, they would be willing to act. He expressed third-person empathy for an imagined collective of white community members. The absence of ignorant white people at the meeting made *second-person expressed empathy* impossible. If white community members attended the dialogue, Carlin's expression of empathy could have been a second-person expression and served as an invitation to be part of the solution. The absence of the imagined other is particularly troubling in this example because ignorant white people likely perpetuated some of the problems raised in the CIC dialogues. Undoubtedly, who is present for a dialogue impacts the possibility of *second-person expressed empathy*.

The format of the CIC meetings also precluded *second-person expressed empathy*. Most moments of empathy remained isolated because the structure Waymon upheld allowed the

school personnel to present uninterrupted and then gave time for community members to respond. For example, Bob Russell, a participant who worked for the civil rights organization CORE, told the story of an ESL summer program teacher who berated their students. He expressed concern that students internalized feelings of inadequacy because of these negative experiences: "[W]hat about the kid?...[after the summer program] then [the students are] tracked right back in the tenth or eleventh or twelfth grade into a basic class where they're termed to be dumb and they believe this after being brainwashed semester after semester."[105] In an expression of third-person empathy, Russell acknowledged the experiences of these ESL students. He spoke out, however, in the middle of Wingard's presentation on ESL. Therefore, Waymon interrupted Russell to point out that participants had agreed to listen to the full presentation before responding: "Bob, can we save this until after this whole section is through, and, I think your question would be appropriate at that time." Waymon returned the dialogue to a one-directional structure that suspended real-time responses. Then, Dr. Hall—Wingard's boss—stopped Wingard from replying to Russell and reiterated the procedural agreements: "Mr. Wingard did say, and I want to correct him, that he'd be ready for questions. I am asking that we have the full discussion after three parts of which this has been the first."[106] This exchange demonstrates the limited opportunity for second-person expressions of empathy when the structure of a dialogue requires participants to bracket their responses. *Second-person expressed empathy* was unlikely to emerge since no students were present for the ESL discussion. But the possibility of its emergence was further limited because the participants were prevented from speaking to and with one another; the communication remained mostly one-directional. Russell articulated his understanding of the students' experiences, but did not receive a direct response because he spoke outside the terms of the dialogue. Participants are unlikely to empathize with others in the

room—i.e. express second-person empathy—if they are not allowed to dialogue with one another.

The CIC meetings exposed shortcomings in *third-person expressed empathy* and obstacles to *second-person expressed empathy* in dialogue settings. They also revealed the most striking distinction between *second-* and *third-person expressed empathy*: vulnerability. The CIC participants' communication did not embrace vulnerability; the participants rarely told personal stories or expressed shared emotions with one another. The moments of expressed empathy were entirely third-person expressions, suggesting second-person empathy requires greater vulnerability. This disparity leads to the question: Why does it feel more vulnerable to experience empathy with someone who is there with us? Perhaps it is that confronting the experiences of someone in the dialogue makes sharing emotions and imagining their experience feel more real, rather than speculating about some abstract other's experience. Imagining the experience of another who is not present to hold you accountable for your storytelling involves little risk. There is greater risk involved when empathizing with someone speaking to you.

Danielle Allen's concept of "political friendship" can help make sense of the consequences of the absence of vulnerability in *third-person expressed empathy*.[107] Interestingly, political friendship looks a lot like empathy. Allen writes:

> Political friendship (which finds its tools in the art of rhetoric) cultivates habits of imagination that generate politically transformative experiences out of ordinary interactions among strangers. Herein lies its power. To be a good rhetorician, one must see oneself as strangers do. The effort to do so entails understanding how one is implicated in strangers' lives, and how calculi of goods and ills looks different from other experiential positions.[108]

Strangers live together in order to talk with one another,[109] and through that shared talk they build habits of empathy. Political friends can imagine how others see them *and* imagine the lived

experience of others. The result is that political friendship builds trust as individuals demonstrate a "radical commitment to other citizens that is needed for a just democratic politics"[110]—a powerful outcome.

Trust, however, can only be built if political friendship is "reciprocal." Allen draws the conclusion that "the techniques of political friendship generate the richest trust when they are exercised in contexts of mutual vulnerability".[111] S*econd-person expressed empathy* opens the possibility for mutual vulnerability and political friendship in a dialogue setting. *Second-person expressed empathy* emerges when an individual shares a personal story and other participants respond by expressing shared emotion, acknowledging their experience, and recognizing differences between themselves and the other person. Sharing a personal story is a vulnerable act. In *second-person expressed empathy*, the other reciprocates that vulnerability by sharing emotions and imagining the experience of the other. *Third-person expressed empathy*, however, evades mutual vulnerability as the empathizer avoids the risk of imagining the experience of someone present for the dialogue. There is no possibility for mutual vulnerability if the person with whom I have empathized is not a part of the conversation and therefore cannot reciprocate. Thus, *third-person expressed empathy* is less likely to build trust and political friendship. Moreover, in political friendship, "unrestrained self-interest...corrodes the bases of trust".[112] While it would be unfair to label third-person empathy as "unrestrained self-interest," it is more self-interested than *second-person expressed empathy*. Third-person expressed empathy's central purpose is persuasion rather than feeling with the other. When addressing contentious issues shaped by systems of privilege and power, as the CIC did, *third-person expressed empathy* falls short because it does not encourage mutual vulnerability and empathy *between* participants in the dialogue.

Conclusion

The CIC's goals were ambitious, asking participants to tackle complex racial problems in the City of San Diego toward the end of the civil rights era. In a retrospective interview, Waymon explained the impact of the dialogues and the CIC: "It turned into a major vehicle for change. The purpose was to bring a new sense of urgency to the problem of race relations in the San Diego area."[113] The successes of the agency in raising controversial issues simultaneously ruffled feathers and spurred future commitment to addressing racism in the region. In 1969, the year following the meetings analyzed in this chapter, San Diego County partnered with the City to establish a county-wide Human Relations Commission, which would replace the CIC. Community members criticized the City's decision, arguing the formation of the Human Relations Commission was an excuse for defunding the CIC for its condemnation of the City. However, community efforts to maintain the CIC were unsuccessful, and on December 31, 1969—27 months after its creation—the CIC dissolved.[114] The CIC served as a model for the Human Relations Commission and its "Living Room Dialogues" in the post-civil rights era.[115]

The CIC meetings prioritized one-way communication. The sessions were structured to allow the school representatives to present, followed by time for the community members to respond. As the moderator, Waymon maintained the established rules and procedures, even when participants complained. He enacted a passive and neutral facilitation style, acting as a turn-taking enforcer during the meetings. He typically avoided interpreting the topic at hand when redirecting the conversation by deferring to the expertise of participants. The format for the dialogues—and Waymon's enforcement of it—generally limited the possibility for *expressed empathy*. However, moments of storytelling brought out *emergent empathy* during the CIC dialogues.

These moments revealed two types of *expressed empathy*: second- vs. third-person. *Second-person expressed empathy* is empathy for "you"—the person a dialogue participant is speaking to. *Third-person expressed empathy* is empathy for a person who is not participating in the dialogue. Empathizing with a real or imagined other outside the dialogue setting—*third-person expressed empathy*—is presumably easier than expressing *second-person empathy* because it requires less accountability. The other with whom you are empathizing is not present and, therefore, cannot challenge the narrative you are telling about them when imagining their experiences. Noticeably, the CIC participants did not articulate a recognition of difference between self and other—the feature of empathy that distinguishes expressions of empathy from shallow comparisons. The absence of self-other differentiation suggests the lack of accountability when expressing third-person empathy makes dialoguers are less inclined to recognize that empathetic imagining is always imperfect.

Tellingly, the CIC participants used third-person expressions of empathy as a means of persuasion. The speakers acknowledged the experiences of the school children in service of their arguments; the imagined experience articulated could be solved by whatever policy or solution the participant proposed. The persuasive function of *third-person expressed empathy* further problematizes the lack of accountability for these expressions of empathy, especially when considering the epistemological and decision-making goals of many dialogue and deliberative bodies. In this case, the individuals most impacted by the CIC's recommendations were school children of color, who held little institutional power as minors and members of marginalized racial groups. Even when dialogue participants told competing stories about the student experience through their expressions of empathy, the absence of student voices should not be overlooked.[116] *Third-person expressed empath*y can be used as a mechanism for making

arguments for those affected by policy without including them in the discussion. As a result, *third-person expressed empathy* can undermine a dialogue's ability to achieve equitable and just outcomes, or simply an accurate understanding of the other's experience.

The lack of accountability for third-person expressions of empathy emphasizes the importance of having diverse participants—who represent the community and issues discussed—attend the dialogue. The absence of Latinx and ESL students during the CIC meetings on education resulted in third- rather than second-person expressions of empathy. Participants imagined the challenges students experienced, but those expressions of empathy seemed insufficient without students present to engage in the conversation. Participants noticed their absence and during the December 6, 1968 session, called for students be invited to a future CIC meeting to share their perspectives.[117] *Second-person expressed empathy* is only possible if the people most impacted by and most able to impact the issue are in the room. I cannot express second-person empathy with someone who is not there. And if no one in the room has any first-person stories to tell—such as a story about being an ESL student—the other participants cannot express shared emotions, acknowledge the other's experiences, and differentiate between themselves and the other in response to those stories.

The format of the CIC meetings also limited the opportunity for *second-person expressed empathy* by shaping when and how participants interacted. The suspension of direct exchanges between school leaders and community members prevented opportunities for participants to empathize *with* each other. The CIC examples suggest when individuals do not engage with one another in real-time, they are unlikely to express second-person empathy. Additionally, the discursive norms of the CIC dialogues discouraged participants from using personal narratives to express their opinions. Empathizing is harder when individuals have not shared personal stories

that can help other participants express shared emotions, acknowledge and imagine their experience, and articulate a recognition of difference between themselves and the other. If a participant shares personal testimony, others can respond to their narrative with second-person expressions of empathy.

Finally, the practice of storytelling in dialogue reveals differences in vulnerability between *second*-and *third-person expressed empathy*. Dialoguers expressing second-person empathy practice mutual vulnerability, a habit of political friendship absent from third-person empathetic expressions. Sharing a personal story is an act of vulnerability that can be reciprocated with mutual vulnerability when another participant expresses shared emotions and acknowledges the experience of the storyteller—*second-person expressed empathy*. However, third-person empathy requires less vulnerability from dialoguers. Not only is there less risk, and therefore less vulnerability, in imagining the experience of someone outside the dialogue space, but reciprocation is impossible since that person is not a part of the conversation. Mutual vulnerability cultivates trust and a commitment to the other, amplifying the epistemological and democratic possibilities of dialogue. The absence of personal storytelling, mutual vulnerability, *second-person expressed empathy* in the CIC meetings raises questions about the role of personal narrative in cultivating empathetic expressions, which I take up in the next chapter.

Chapter 1 Notes

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[56] Reich, “Minorities Given Choice.”

[57] Clifford, “‘60s Agency Had Bumpy Tenure in `bigoted’ City.”

[58] *June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1)*, Community Dialogue Tapes (August 18, 1967 to June 6, 1969) (San Diego, California, 1968), Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#reel14-1; *July 12, 1968 (Reel #15-1)*, Community Dialogue Tapes (August 18, 1967 to June 6, 1969) (San Diego, California, 1968), Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#reel15-1; *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1)*, Community Dialogue Tapes (August 18, 1967 to June 6, 1969) (San Diego, California, 1968), Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#reel16-1; and *August 6, 1968 (Reel #03-2)*, Community Dialogue Tapes (August 18, 1967 to June 6, 1969) (San Diego, California, 1968), Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#reel03-2.

[59] The following descriptions are adapted from the San Diego State University Special Collections and University Archives archival notes.

Community Dialogue Tapes (August 18, 1967 to June 6, 1969) (San Diego, California, 1968), Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#reel03-2.

June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1): Total running time: 3:05:31

Representatives from the San Diego School Unified District responded to a list of concerns identified by CIC participants about the quality of education provided to minority students in the city. The representatives presented initiatives that were designed to address critiques of the

"quality of instruction, counseling and advising services, discipline, and curriculum content." Latinx and Asian American participants critiqued the programs for only targeting Black students. The District representatives provided data on the drop-out rates of Mexican American high school students and there was discussion about the reason for these high drop-out rates.

July 12, 1968 (Reel #15-1): Total running time: 2:40:41

The dialogue about the quality of education for marginalized students continued. Topics included continued discussion of drop-out rates, the importance of Latinx representation in school staff and administration, and the inclusion of the history and culture of people of color in the school curriculum. Community members critiqued the efforts of the San Diego Unified School District "as token, inadequate attempts to approach serious problems," the perceived failures of School Board, and the inadequate representation offered by the PTA and Title I advisory Committee. The participants called for continued dialogue about the schools in the next meeting.

August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1): Total running time: 3:02:11

A representative from the San Diego Unified School District. presented a report on the pilot English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Participants responded that the District's programs inadequately addressed the needs of Mexican American and Mexican immigrant students and called for addressing the root of the issue: white racism. Participants also critiqued the use of biased intelligence tests to track students according to ability, because they favored white children and were psychologically harmful to all students, regardless of race. Although they expressed fear of retribution for speaking out, a few white and Latinx teachers criticized the schools and called on the School Board to enact changes.

December 6, 1968 (Reel #03-2): [Note: This audiotape appears to capture only part of a meeting, as it begins and ends abruptly, and is only 22 minutes long.]

Participants continued discussion about problems in schools, including the Mexican American dropout rate, the devaluation of minority students' cultures, inadequate counseling programs, and student suspensions. The participants called on the San Diego Unified School District to hire a counselor who could understand the concerns of and advocate for marginalized students. Additionally, it was suggested that students be invited to a future CIC meeting to share their experiences and perspectives.

[60] "June 7, 1968 (Meeting Minutes)," June 7, 1968, Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/nas/streaming/dept/scuastaf/collections/CIC/MeetingMinutes/CIC_06-07-68wm.pdf; "July 12, 1968 Dialogue (Meeting Minutes)," July 12, 1968, Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/nas/streaming/dept/scuastaf/collections/CIC/MeetingMinutes/CIC_07-12-68wm.pdf; "August 2, 1968 City Schools (Meeting Minutes)," August 2, 1968, Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/nas/streaming/dept/scuastaf/collections/CIC/MeetingMinutes/CIC_08-02-68wm.pdf; and "December 6, 1968 Dialogue – Education (Meeting Minutes)," December 6, 1968, Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University, https://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/nas/streaming/dept/scuastaf/collections/CIC/MeetingMinutes/CIC-12-06-68wm.pdf.

[61] Reich, "Minorities Given Choice."

[62] C.A. Shattuck, "Letter from C. A. Shattuck to Robert Russell, April 3, 1964," April 3, 1964, San Diego State University, Special Collections and University Archives, https://humanitieshub.sdsu.edu/omeka/items/show/210.

[63] The meeting minutes from the dialogues report the attendance of "Mr. Carl," however, in the audio recording he is clearly and repeatedly addressed as "Mr. Carlin."

[64] Kim, "Community in Conflict," 45.

[65] Kim, 62–63.

[66] Harvey J. Goodfriend and Robert Mosher, "A Preliminary Investigation into an Integrated Approach to the Planning of Higher Education Facilities - Final Report" (Washington, DC: Office of Education, Bureau of Research, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, August 1969), 92, ERIC, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED032741.pdf.

[67] "San Diego Community College District Counselor Spring Workshop: Exploring the Leadership Role of Counselors in Post-Secondary Education - The College Connection," San Diego Community College District Personnel and Guidance Association, 1994, The Library, UC San Diego, https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb4950137j/_1.pdf.

[68] San Diego State University. Department of History, *Estelle Chacon Oral History* (San Diego, California, 1973), San Diego State University, Department of History, Special Collections and University Archives, http://archive.org/details/csds_000028.

[69] United States Congress House Committee on Education and Labor Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities, "The Equal Opportunity for Displaced Homemakers Act: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, Ninety-Fourth Congress, Second Session, on H.R. 10272 ... November 18, 1976," (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

[70] Vogler, "1970-71 Evaluation Report of ESEA."

[71] Herbert Ibarra, "Teaching in Spanish to the Spanish Speaking," *Foreign Language Annals* 2, no. 3 (1969): 310, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1969.tb00308.x.

[72] "About Our School | Ibarra," accessed February 11, 2020, https://www.sandiegounified.org/schools/ibarra/about-our-school.

[73] Kara N. Dillard, "Envisioning the Role of Facilitation in Public Deliberation," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 41, no. 3 (August 2013): 217–35, https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2013.826813, 220.

[74] Dillard, 222-23.

[75] Dillard, 225.

[76] Dillard, 229-30.

[77] Dillard, 220-22.

[78] Dillard, 226-28.

[79] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[80] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1)*.

[81] Facilitator trainings emphasize the facilitator's role in "leveling the conversational playing field by giving participants the vocabulary, factual information, and cooperative situation they needed to reciprocally engage with one another."

Renee Heath and Elisa Majors, "Beyond Aggregation: 'The Wisdom of Crowds' Meets Dialogue in the Case Study of Shaping America's Youth," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 13, no. 2 (November 6, 2017): 13-14, https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.279.

Occasionally, Waymon's facilitation reflected moderate involvement when participants needed more information to understand the discussion and engage in the meetings. For example, he intervened to make sure participants understood California legislation that came up during a conversation: "Let me refer to the legislation and give you the references that they're talking about, so everybody here knows about the new legislation, some of its details. Instead of my doing it, Bob, would you?" (*Reel#15-1*). While Waymon engaged in more than "traffic enforcement," his intervention was limited. He explicitly asked for clarification on the details of the law, rather than requesting or offering an interpretation of it. Waymon ensured everyone was on the same page, but deferred his expertise to Bob Russell, rather than providing an explanation of the law himself. Waymon avoiding acting as the expert—a practice some facilitators see as fundamental.

In another meeting, Waymon interjected when the term "dropout" was used to describe different student situations. He intervened to ensure that participants were on the same page. He summarized a community member's understanding of the definition and then deferred to a study conducted by the school district to define it (*Reel #14-1*). Again, he did not offer his personal interpretation, following the district's official definition to avoid coming across as the authority.

[82] At minimum, facilitators are expected to be "neutral and competent."

Jodi Sandfort and Kathryn Quick, "Deliberative Technology: A Holistic Lens for Interpreting Resources and Dynamics in Deliberation," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 13, no. 1 (April 20, 2017): 4, https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.273.

Facilitators emphasize the importance of neutrality in their role in order to allow for productive conflict by giving space to both majority and dissenting voices. However, Heath et al. are mindful that neutrality is somewhat of a myth, pointing to critiques of neutrality that suggest that what facilitators do is be "multi-partial," rather than impartial. See Renee Heath et al., "Beyond Aggregation," 14; and Parisa Parsa, "Turning to Each Other," *Public Conversations* (blog), July 11, 2016. http://www.publicconversations.org/blog/turning-each-other.

[83] *June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1).*

[84] *August 6, 1968 (Reel #03-2).*

[85] *June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1).*

[86] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[87] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[88] When facilitators fail to maintain impartiality they are likely to spark feelings of "resentment" from participants who will view them as unfair, whether it is allowing a single person to dominate the conversation or inserting their own perspective into the conversation, two examples Yeh provided in his analysis. See Hsin-Yi Yeh, "Boundary Objects and Public Deliberation:

Analyzing the Management of Boundary Tensions in the Consensus Conference," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 9, no. 2 (October 25, 2013): 23, https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.167.

[89] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[90] *June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1).*

[91] *July 12, 1968 (Reel #15-1).*

[92] *June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1).*

[93] *July 12, 1968 (Reel #15-1).*

[94] *July 12, 1968 (Reel #15-1).*

[95] *July 12, 1968 (Reel #15-1).*

[96] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[97] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[98] José Jiménez was a fictional character portrayed by comedian Bill Dana. Dana's impression gained immense popularity but was criticized by some for drawing on problematic ethnic stereotypes. Dana himself was ambivalent about the character. He stopped performing Jiménez by the end of the 1960s as the civil rights movement progressed and he saw how the character had been used to portray Latinos negatively. However, he later expressed regret about ending his performances as Jiménez because he believed the Latinx community appreciated his character, based on the honors he received from National Hispanic Media Coalition.

Harrison Smith, "Bill Dana, Comedian behind the Bumbling 1960s Character José Jiménez, Dies at 92," *Washington Post*, June 19, 2017, sec. Obituaries, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/bill-dana-comedian-behind-the-bumbling-1960s-character-jose-jimenez-dies-at-92/2017/06/19/90f56b84-5500-11e7-a204-ad706461fa4f_story.html.

[99] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[100] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[101] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[102] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[103] *June 7, 1968 (Reel #14-1).*

[104] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[105] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[106] *August 2, 1968 (Reel #16-1).*

[107] The concept of political friendship is particularly useful for this case because Allen argues democratic deliberation is central to building political friendship. Political friendship "gives a community an opportunity to address inconsistencies in how different citizens think benefits, burdens, recognition, and agency should be distributed within the polity."

Danielle S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 151.

[108] Allen, 171.

[109] Allen, 135.

[110] Allen, 157.

[111] Allen, 174.

[112] Allen, 165.

[113] Falchi. "Local Civil Rights Leaders to Be Honored Sat. Nov. 7."

[114] Special Collections & University Archives, "Citizens Interracial Committee | SDSU Library," San Diego State University Library, accessed October 28, 2019, https://library.sdsu.edu/scua/citizens-interracial-committee#tapes; Falchi. "Local Civil Rights Leaders to Be Honored Sat. Nov. 7."

[115] Clifford, "'60s Agency Had Bumpy Tenure in `bigoted' City."

[116] While a retrospective news article referenced a student representative to the CIC, Walter Kudumu, he did not speak during the dialogues nor was he listed in the meeting minutes I analyzed.

Mia Taylor, "Activist Devoted to Civil Rights till the End," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, April 17, 2008, sec. CZ-1.

[117] *August 6, 1968 (Reel #03-2).*

Activism by African American and Latinx students at Lincoln High School demonstrates the value student voices could have offered. In April 1969, students formed a group called the Central Committee and outlined 22 demands for administrative and curricular changes, including the culturally responsive classes—a topic discussed during CIC meetings.

Kim, "Community in Conflict," 30–31.

Chapter 2: Facilitating Expressed Empathy through Analogous Experiences: Underheard Voices in the Local Voices Network-New York Public Library Community Conversations

> *"New York is an ugly city, a dirty city. Its climate is a scandal, its politics are used to frighten children, its traffic is madness, its competition is murderous. But there is one thing about it—once you have lived in New York and it has become your home, no place else is good enough. All of everything is concentrated here, population, theatre, art, writing, publishing, importing, business, murder, mugging, luxury, poverty. It is all of everything."*
>
> John Steinbeck, "Autobiography: Making of a New Yorker" July 21, 1965[1]

American author, John Steinbeck wrote these words about New York City in *The New York Times* in 1953, capturing the city's chaos and magic. Over half a century later, the complexity of the United States' most populated city persists: New York is one of the nation's most culturally and ethnically diverse cities and has one of the largest income inequality gaps in the United States with the average income for the top one percent being 113 times that of the bottom 99 percent in Manhattan.[2]

In a city as massive as NYC, the issues impacting it are as diverse as the residents who live there. In an article anticipating "9 Stories That Will Matter in 2019," published on January 2, *The New York Time* columnist Azi Paybarah identified public transportation, marijuana legalization, racial integration in public schools, minimum wage increases, and the housing crisis as stories of significance for the city in the coming year.[3] New legislation enacted in 2019 ranged from bans on Styrofoam containers and the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies, to expanded gender markers on birth certificates, to family-focused polices such as requiring changing tables in both men's and women's restrooms and the expansion of paid family leave.[4] A look at the New York Today newsletter further illustrates the range and complexity of issues shaping the

lives of New Yorkers in 2019 with the daily roundup covering issues like an increase in gun violence occurring unevenly across the city's boroughs[5] to concerns about improper trash disposal on the city's streets.[6] Even a seemingly singular problem—the city's housing crisis—encompassed multiple facets: the revelation that potentially tens of thousands of immigrants were living in illegal basement apartments;[7] the reality that 114,000 children were experiencing homelessness in NYC;[8] the report that more than 400,000 public housing units managed by the New York City Housing Authority were in extreme disrepair due to mismanagement;[9] and ongoing threats to affordable housing protections, weakened by deregulation and exploitative landlords.[10] Undoubtedly, the cultural and political landscapes of NYC remain as multifaceted as Steinbeck's characterization of the city five decades earlier.

Nationally, the major news stories of 2019 reflected the issues in New York City in their scope and complexity. The year began with a record number of women sworn into Congress[11] during an ongoing federal government shutdown—the longest in history at that time with 800,000 workers impacted—fueled by tensions between Democrats in Congress and Donald Trump's White House.[12] The Supreme Court of the United States ruled on significant cases for the country's democracy, preventing the White House from adding a citizenship question to the 2020 census[13] and allowing partisan gerrymandering to continue, ruling it was not an issue reviewable by federal courts.[14] Special counsel Robert Mueller's report into President Trump and Russian interference in the 2016 election was made public after Unites States Attorney General William Barr concluded that Trump's presidential campaign did not collude or conspire with Russia during the 2016 election.[15] Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook, appeared before Congress facing difficult questions about the promotion of disinformation, mismanagement of child pornography appearing on the site, the company's cryptocurrency

plans, and issues of workplace diversity.[16] The year was marked by ongoing gun violence underscored by the striking end-of-year headline: "There were more mass shootings than days in 2019."[17] There were 1,190 deaths by police officers in the United States in 2019, with disproportionate police violence in communities of color.[18] Tabloids and major news outlets alike covered the Department of Justice's largest college admissions case scandal, known as Operation Varsity Blues, and Americans marveled at how the wealthy had bribed their children's way into elite universities.[19] The nation celebrated along with the United States Women's National Soccer Team in their World Cup win, prompting renewed discussion over equal pay in men and women's sports.[20] Purdue Pharma, the pharmaceutical maker of OxyContin—the drug deemed responsible for starting and fueling the nation's opioid epidemic—filed for bankruptcy to protect itself against thousands of state and federal lawsuits.[21] Federal prosecutors charged Jeffrey Epstein, a member of elite social circles, with sex trafficking and he was later found dead in his jail cell, with apparent death by suicide.[22] The ongoing impacts of climate change were evident with record-breaking heat: July marked the hottest month in recorded history and 2019 closed out the second hottest year and hottest decade on record.[23] All these issues were shaped by a backdrop of political polarization. The 2018 midterm elections saw record turnout more typical of a presidential election, with a 70 percent increase from Democratic voters from the 2014 election—presumably a backlash to Trump.[24] Data from the start of 2019 showed that Trump had an 88 percent approval rating from Republicans and only 6 percent from Democrats.[25] And the year rounded out with the House of Representatives adopting two articles of impeachment against Trump for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.[26]

Local Voice Network (LVN) emerged in 2019 in response to the political polarization and diverse issues facing society—just one of more than 100 organizations dedicated to helping

people and communities connect across differences.[27] LVN is a project created by Cortico, a nonprofit, in partnership with MIT's Media Lab, specifically the Laboratory for Social Machines (now the MIT Center for Constructive Communication).[28] Cortico is funded by major philanthropic and entrepreneurial players, including the The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Reid Hoffman, Craig Newmark Philanthropies, and Ali Rowghani.[29] According to the organization's website, Cortico emerged "out of desire to transform our polarized and toxic national discourse into a thriving public sphere."[30] Cortico's mission is to "foster constructive public conversation in communities and in the media to improve our understanding of one another."[31] Their model argues "constructive conversation is humanizing," and organizes intentional "boundary-crossing" dialogues.[32]

LVN records community conversations to bring these dialogues to stakeholders, including media partners, public officials, and community leaders. The conversations are stored on a digital platform, creating a digital network of community conversations where "local voices" can "be heard in civil, empathic public conversation that heals divisions from the inside of communities out."[33] The LVN model uses local volunteers to organize and host community conversations. The conversations are led by trained facilitators and recorded using a "Digital Hearth."[34] The "Hearth" is a round recording device that works without needing WiFi or to be plugged in.[35] Transcribed conversations are added to a digital database that uses MIT-developed AI and data-processing tools for both deep and comprehensive analysis.[36] This technology includes a highlighting tool for sharing participant contributions, tools for searching within and across conversations, geographic location data, keyword organizing schemas, and labels and hashtags. It is available to participants, community partners, journalists, researchers, and other

stakeholders given access to the platform. LVN's long-term goal is to make the database fully public.[37]

LVN launched in 2019 in Wisconsin and New York.[38] In NYC, LVN created a partnership with the New York Public Library (NYPL) system. The NYPL conversations were a pilot program to serve as a model for future library partnerships with LVN.[39] The NYPL conversations focused on neighborhood concerns with the goal of bringing these local conversations to journalists and decision-makers in the city. The NYPL webpage announcing the partnership identified four key elements participants could expect: relationship development with neighbors; a chance to contribute to facilitated conversation on local problems; an opportunity to consider different perspectives on those issues; and that the conversations would be recorded to be shared with community officials and media.[40] Facilitators often explained LVN's goals and partnership with the library to participants during the conversations:

> This is a new company really and they're partnering with the library. Basically, what they're going to do with theses recorded conversations is they're going to put it in a big database where people can look up stuff under topic…What they want to do, is they want to make it available for journalists. They want to make it available for political leaders, to see what's going on in a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. It's more grassroots.[41]

Typically, participants were told the reasons for the NYPL partnership and LVN's mission, making the purpose and goals for the conversations transparent.

The first LVN-NYPL conversations were held in February 2019 and the project is ongoing.[42] The NYPL branches hosted neighborhood conversations and LVN connected the branches with other community organizations to host additional conversations.[43] The conversations were held in ten libraries within the NYPL system across three boroughs: the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island.[44] The NYPL promoted the conversations in the branches and online on sites like Eventbrite. Within the first four months, LVN and the NYPL had hosted

65 conversations with more than 300 participants.[45] The partnership also included access to the Digital Hearth technology to potentially allow patrons to check-out the recording tool to hold their own conversations.[46]

The NYPL and LVN partnership coupled the two organizations' missions for serving local communities. LVN was specifically created to "bring under-heard community voices, perspectives and stories to the center of a healthier public dialogue."[47] LVN approached the NYPL based on the system's existing community conversation programming. According to one librarian who facilitated a conversation in Turtle Bay, Manhattan, the NYPL programming office—which oversees all the library branches—was interested in the proposed LVN partnership since it could extend the impact of their community conversations; they "wouldn't just end in the room."[48] Importantly, the NYPL had the ability to connect with and bring in community members central to LVN's mission.

The focus on underheard voices is significant to this project. I build upon Renee Heath's research which explored "stories' constitutive power to foster equity via counter narratives to dominant perspectives in the dialogic situation."[49] Using police-community dialogues, Heath identified storytelling as a potentially equalizing mode of public discourse when stark differences in power exist between participants. In this chapter, I consider storytelling as a tool for amplifying underheard voices and the role this model of dialogue plays in fostering expressed empathy. In what follows, I explain my approach to analyzing the LVN-NYPL conversations and describe the structure of a typical conversation. Next, I explore the facilitation principles embraced by the conversation facilitators to understand how they shaped the storytelling practices during the dialogues. I demonstrate how storytelling resulted in expressions of empathy rooted in analogous experiences, considering the possibilities for stories to build connections,

while raising questions about the value of empathy based around similar experiences. Finally, I situate these conversations and expressions of empathy within their larger context as part of the LVN database to consider the impact of bringing these stories to wider audiences.

The LVN Model for the NYPL Conversations

To understand the LVN-NYPL project, I began by listening to the audio recording of ten conversations to identify patterns in moments of expressed empathy. I selected the first public conversations—each in a new neighborhood—within the three boroughs where the NYPL hosted sessions. Based on these criteria, I listened to three conversations held in the Bronx, four conversations held in Manhattan, and three conversations held in Staten Island. After I listened to these ten conversations, I reviewed the transcripts of all 75 in-person conversations running from February 2019 to March 2020 to confirm the patterns I identified and to look for additional examples of expressed empathy.[50] The quotes included in this chapter are copied from the LVN transcripts, though I made minor edits in some cases to correct the transcript based on the audio recordings.

The NYPL conversations generally ranged from half an hour to an hour and forty-five minutes. In some cases, only one community member attended, while other conversations had as many as ten participants. Usually, the number of public participants fell somewhere in the middle with about five to seven community members present. The NYPL hosted the conversations in a range of spaces, including library branches and community centers for teens, adults with disabilities, seniors, artists, and immigrant women.

Participants perceived the library as a "neutral space" for these community conversations. Erica, who described herself as an "educated person of color" who spent her whole life in Staten Island—outside of attending Vanderbilt University for her undergraduate degree—shared: "I

think this is a great place. I think it's the neutral ground of a location, not like a religious place. It's not like a city— [crosstalk agrees] And I think it's a good place to have these talks."[51] Erica's comment validated the partnership between the NYPL network and LVN. In another conversation, Barbara, who identified as Jewish, shared a similar appreciation for the library as the site of the conversations:

> I think it's important that these discussions take place in a library which most people feel it is a safe place. You don't necessarily feel it's safe in a school or in a government building. Particularly people who are not necessarily legal residents here. Or who feel for whatever reason, disenfranchised from other places or unwelcome. The library [inaudible] is free and open to all. And we come to a library talk. I wouldn't feel this comfortable going to a church, or a synagogue or a mosque, or any of the government buildings [inaudible] that I was being judged for whatever reason.[52]

The comfort participants felt about being in the library is significant, given the challenges of hosting dialogues across lines of difference. Michele Holt-Shannon, a facilitator interviewed in Heath's research on police-community dialogues, suggested neutrality in situations where there are stark power differentials is about "holding [a neutral] space" for a conversation where different perspectives can be shared and heard.[53] Given that even highly competent facilitators may not be able to overcome barriers to inclusion such as power dynamics,[54] the library potentially mitigated differences between participants based on their statements about its neutrality.

Facilitators' physical positioning in the room can also demonstrate neutrality, such as sitting in the circle with participants rather than standing.[55] The LVN model follows these practices for facilitator and participant seating. Participants circle around the "Digital Hearth," which captures the participants voices through multiple microphones embedded within the device. The "Hearth" is circular and made of wood and wool to create an aesthetic that could fit

into traditional home décor. According to Cortico's website, the circular design of Digital Hearth was purposeful:

> A circle has no front or back, and is equally approached from any angle. The Hearth leverages this impartial equity as it sits in the center of a conversation, visually demonstrating that all voices are welcome. From each seat around a table, the Hearth appears the same, both to the conversation facilitator who has led dozens of conversations, and to a new face, joining for the first time.[56]

Cortico intentionally designed the "Digital Hearth" to encourage participants and the facilitator to sit together around it and to invite all participants to contribute to the dialogue. Still, the presence of the Digital Hearth likely influenced engagement as one participant noted: "knowing that it'll be-that it is being recorded, transcribed and might be on the interwebs for eternity also kind of helps us as conversationalists to be more thought-provoking and be more mindful of others."[57]

LVN trained a cohort of branch librarians, as well as individuals working for LVN, to facilitate the conversations.[58] Training materials typically include ground rules for the dialogue, agendas, discussion questions, and directions about the purpose of the dialogue.[59] LVN-NYPL used this approach for facilitator materials and training, as evidenced by the consistent structure of the conversations.[60] Anecdotally, librarians often seemed to work in the communities in which they resided, and LVN staff ranged from native New Yorkers to newer residents living in different parts of the city.

The facilitators began each conversation by reading legal language provided by LVN and by setting expectations. Facilitators told participants that the purpose of the conversations was to provide neighbors with the opportunity "to listen and learn about each other, each other's lives;" build connections and relationships across lines of difference; and to "lift up voices and needs of the community" to be shared with community leaders and politicians, journalists and media

organizations, and the NYPL community.[61] Often, participants were also able to articulate the purpose of the conversations, as captured by one participant's comment: "My understanding also is that it's being directed to underheard voices. Voices that are not usually heard. It's to give them the opportunity to actually have a voice."[62]

After facilitators communicated the purpose of the conversation, either participants or the facilitator would read through guidelines for the conversation. These 12 guidelines acted as "ground rules" to ensure "that everyone gets a chance to share and to learn from others in this conversation." Facilitators are the primary intervention for helping to cultivate meaningful deliberative discourse. They set the tone for deliberations and dialogues by "establishing ground rules that shape how participants talk and share ideas."[63] The process of setting up the conversation through shared norms and modes of engagements with participants is called "*presentation*."[64] The LVN-NYPL rules included: turning off cell phones; speaking from your own experiences; allowing everyone the opportunity to speak, taking turns, and listening and pausing for reflection; and assuming best intent, while acknowledging impact. Once the rules were read, the facilitator asked participants if they had any questions about the guidelines and to agree to them.[65] Facilitators are responsible for creating a conversational space that empowers individuals from diverse backgrounds.[66] The LVN rules tried to establish conversational norms that were welcoming and inclusive of all participants.

The conversations then proceeded through a series of questions that were consistent across the dialogues. To illustrate the set of questions posed to participants, I selected a conversation on police, mental health, and social issues held in St. George, Staten Island facilitated by a librarian at the St. George Library named Daniel. The questions began by asking participants to "share a value that is important to you and how it relates to your life in the

community…and how it is related to what brought you here today."[67] Typically, the facilitators started by answering this question themselves and then allowing each participant a turn to speak. Facilitators should model the level of vulnerability they hope to see from participants.[68] By answering the first question themselves, facilitators were able to demonstrate how personal experiences could be used to answer the questions. After the first question, the facilitators would "withdraw" from the conversation except to moderate and would explicitly state this shift in their participation with statements like: "At this point I will withdraw myself from sharing experience, I will continue moderating the conversation." The next question asked participants to take turns sharing "a personal story from your life that has shaped who you are and would help others understand what is important to you." Facilitators offered suggestions like: "If it helps, you can reflect on the value you selected in the last round and think of a story that illustrates a time when this value was either challenged or reinforced for you." Then the facilitators asked participants to share experiences that would provide "a picture of what you like" about living in the neighborhood and to share a story that would illustrate what "most concerns you about life in this community." The final questions were future-focused: "What do you hope is different in your community in five years from now?"; "What one thing would you like your local representatives to hear?"; and "What's something that you'll take with you and you will like to reflect further on in your mind, in your heart, after this conversation?"[69] The wording of the questions remained relatively uniform across conversations.

The LVN-NYPL facilitators engaged facilitation practices typical of dialogue settings. The rules for the conversations that required turn-taking, careful listening, pausing for reflection, and asking honest questions followed the "moderation principle of giving attention to one person at a time." According to Hans Asenbaum, "letting this individual freely express and elaborate on

his or her thoughts as everybody else listens and ponders what is said, allows for the creation of new solutions. Telling stories, giving testimony, and listening facilitate inclusion in a *contingent* 'we,' while both belonging and maintaining independence."[70] This principle balances each individual's contribution to develop a collective experience among all participants as they hear one another's stories together. Facilitators applied this principle when they reminded participants to pause before speaking or to not interrupt: "There are just some rules to let people finish talking and then ask questions so that we don't cut anyone off."[71] Participants took turns answering the questions facilitators posed, and although they were encouraged to "engag[e] with each other,"[72] they were also expected to give each person time to finish their thought and to take a moment to consider what they just heard before diving into conversation.

Facilitators also practiced the principle Alfred Moore termed, "following from the front." Enacting this principle is a fundamental challenge for facilitators: "The facilitator necessarily occupies a leadership position in the deliberating group, yet must follow the group as it unfolds its own discourse on the issue at hand. The facilitator is both part of the structure within which deliberation is supposed to emerge, and self-evidently a participant in the actual discourse itself."[73] Facilitators adopted a blended approach allowing the conversation to unfold following the participants' contributions, but also maintaining their responsibility to ask questions and encourage everyone to share personal stories. Often, they stated their approach. For example, a conversation facilitated by Max, a local reporter working with LVN who described himself as a "relatively new New Yorker," acknowledged his position and approach at the start: "I am going to be mostly listening during the conversation, and asking some clarifying questions, but in the beginning I'm going to read this kind of welcome intro message."[74] After sharing a value to answer the first question and model the type of story-based answers participants should provide,

Alex, another LVN facilitator, explained he would "take myself out of the active sharing…to hold the space for you to be able to share."[75] His choice to facilitate by "mostly listening" enacted the "following from the front" approach—a method consistently practiced by the LVN-NYPL facilitators. Traditionally, facilitators are responsible for prioritizing listening and keeping opinions to themselves in an effort to maintain neutrality.[76]

LVN-NYPL facilitators intervened when appropriate. Facilitators are responsible for intervening to serve a dialogue's goal of reaching mutual understanding. Interventions can include encouraging quiet participants to contribute or asking participants to make space for others to talk, asking participants to clarify their contributions, summarizing participant contributions, getting the conversation back on topic, and managing conflict.[77] These interventions increase the likelihood that each person is heard and each point of view is considered.[78] When facilitators ask probing questions it is called "*elicitation*." And when the facilitator brings up statements made previously during the dialogue, asks participants to consider multiple perspectives, and connects the conversation to the overall purpose of the deliberation it is called "*interpretation*."[79]

LVN-NYPL facilitators enacted each of these practices. Max drew in quiet participants while facilitating the first conversation held in Allerton: "I want to check in with Manny and Takisha. I haven't heard from you guys yet." Manny, who is the library's branch manager responded to Max's efforts. Then Max reiterated the question: "We're thinking about a story or a memory related to…an interaction with the healthcare system that still impacts you today." This restatement prompted Takisha, whose stated goal was "to learn from my neighbors," to share a personal story.[80] Research demonstrates that dialoguers express satisfaction with facilitators who effectively manage participation by giving each person equal time and drawing out quiet

participants. Notably, participants of color express stronger appreciation than white participants for facilitators who manage to ensure equitable speaking time.[81]

When the same conversation moved away from storytelling during a series of back-and-forth conversation, Max reiterated the expectation that participants focus on sharing personal narratives: "I want to take a moment and just return back to some of our guidelines to speaking from our experiences. So thank you Jackie for sharing that story about your experience of Einstein. And I want us to hear some other folks about their experiences here in the Bronx with the healthcare system." His redirection returned the conversation to the posed question, prompting Grace—a self-declared skeptic ("I'll agree but we'll see if I say anything.")—to tell a story about being in the hospital.[82]

Another facilitator strategy involves "articulating a position and reflecting it back for approval."[83] Facilitators used this strategy to affirm participants' contributions. For example, during exchange between Peter, a NYPL staff member facilitating the conversation, and Jarrell, a Harlem resident since 1974 and neighborhood historian, Peter intervened to affirm Jarrell's contribution, which prompted another participant, Cunningham, to contribute their approval of what Peter said. Jarrell shared a story about excessive police response to neighborhood activity:

> Jarrell: …but I have seen police just pull up, and these two kids on the street corner, all of a sudden they pull up five cars, they jump out and everybody's like, "What the cops doing here?"
>
> Peter: And why are there so many of them?
>
> Cunningham: Yeah. I've seen them in the subways sometimes. All of a sudden there's 20 cops running down the subway steps and people trying to go up, like, "What's going on?"[84]

To reinforce Jarrell's point, Peter raised a question about the number of officers who respond to situations. Cunningham then joined the conversation with their own story about seeing excessive

police responses. By articulating a position, Peter's facilitation strategy engaged another group member.

The primary facilitator principle used in all the conversations aligned with LVN's goals for the conversations: sharing personal stories to build neighbor relations. In dialogue, facilitators have found that stories can "teach" when participants are given space to articulate their experiences.[85] The NYPL facilitators emphasized stories' capacity to teach, asking participants to use stories as a way for answering the questions posed about their perspectives on their neighborhood: "And I encourage you to really share a story from your experience that will help us give a picture about what you like and why. When you speak up then and put what you want to say in the circle."[86] Rather than simply asking participants what they like about the community, the LVN model forwarded storytelling as a tool for articulating likes and dislikes.

Facilitators suggested storytelling could be a tool for fostering connections based on similar experiences: "If you hear somebody else say something that really connects to something in your own personal experience or something that you want to share, feel free to chime in."[87] Facilitators explicitly encouraged participants to make connections with one another. An exchange between participants in a conversation focused on transportation for senior citizens captured how this framing encouraged participants to connect. José, a retiree living with his wife who has post-polio syndrome from childhood illness, Anne, a retired teacher who came across town because of the conversation's topic, and Carole, another retired community member, discussed the risks of taking public transportation as an older person:

> José: …If you bump into an elderly person, more than likely that person's on the floor. If the suffering of that encounter is going to be long range, that day they may have actually fractured something…
>
> Anne: Especially a younger person with a backpack. If they hit us with the backpack with a swing and it's going towards a person.

José: Seniors are particularly affected.

Anne: Yes, and ladies, because they're shorter than men with backpacks.

Carole: Not just the seniors, everybody else is—

Anne: Yes. They don't realize it, but we can be harmed.

José: No, they don't. They forget they have a thing on their back.[88]

José expressed strong convictions about this topic given the fragility and limited mobility of his wife. Others in the conversation shared and affirmed his concerns. This conversation illustrates the types of connections that were made across the NYPL LVN conversations. Individuals shared personal narratives about living in NYC and uncovered similarities among their experiences.

Facilitating Expressed Empathy through Analogous Stories and Experiences

The emphasis on sharing personal stories during the conversations facilitated moments of expressed empathy. Strikingly, these moments were consistently rooted in *analogous* experiences. The examples of expressed empathy I collected from the NYPL conversations provide an interesting case study of empathy cultivated based on similar rather than different experiences. A central goal of empathy is to build connection across difference. As the subsequent examples illustrate, participants established connections, raising questions about the value of building empathy within communities and what degree of difference is required for empathy's role to be meaningful. I selected examples from conversations across the three boroughs to illustrate the expressed empathy in the dialogues.

There were several small moments of emergent empathy throughout the conversations expressed through acknowledgment responses. Participants used phrases and sounds that briefly acknowledged the other's experience. In a conversation on education in the Bronx, two participants, Will and Takisha, remembered separate experiences of feeling deflated after

conversations with adults in school. Takisha, a parent of two upper elementary students living in a neighborhood in the center of the Bronx, shared a story about being discouraged by a high school counselor. Then Will, a father and the branch manager of the Tremont Library, told his story: “The sad thing is that I have a similar story of being discouraged in school.” After hearing his story, Takisha acknowledged his experience in a single phrase: “And you’re at such a vulnerable stage in your life, right?”[89] This simple statement expressed understanding of Will’s experience—a central tenet of expressed empathy—and stemmed from the similarities of their stories.

Acknowledgement responses prompted by analogous experiences enacted key components of expressed empathy: language that acknowledges the other’s experience and expressing shared emotions. The NYPL hosted conversations with Lifestyles for the Disabled—an organization offering support for the “developmentally disabled population of Staten Island” that serves over 400 adults and families[90] through job training, arts and crafts programming, day trips, and volunteer opportunities.[91] At one session, participants shared stories of losing a parent or a grandparent and how they managed independence and responsibility after the loss of a caregiver. Yule, a lifelong New Yorker working with LVN, facilitated the conversation between seven Lifestyles program participants and Eddie, who runs a media center that provides programming for Lifestyles.

In response to Yule’s prompt to share “something from your past or something that shaped you or a story that can help us learn a little bit more about you,” Gregory, who started attending Lifestyles programming as a 21-year-old, told the story of his grandmother dying. The participants offered Gregory acknowledgement responses through short phrases and sounds that demonstrated active listening and shared emotion. To continue the conversation, Yule asked

another attendee named Kevin if he had any memories to share, prompting Kevin to tell the story of losing his grandmother. Then Sal, another Lifestyles participant, disclosed that her mother died at the age 72. Finally, Andrew, a 36-year-old Lifestyles participant, chimed in to say: "I understand how y'all feel because my grandfather passed away eight years ago."[92] Andrew articulated what was implied in each of these stories: that they understood the others' experiences of loss. During each of these contributions, the other participants offered vocal expressions of understanding and care through feedback sounds that acted as acknowledgment responses. These brief moments of verbal feedback demonstrated that they recognized each speaker's experience and shared feelings of sadness.

As the conversation unfolded, it turned to the challenges of taking care of yourself after the death of a family member. Here the group members offered heartfelt acknowledgement of Andrew's experience and provided reassurance:

> Andrew: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's something I got to do myself.
>
> Gregory: Yes, as an adult [crosstalk]—
>
> Andrew: I got to try to—
>
> Eddie: You always have somebody supporting you.
>
> Andrew: I got to be able to try to do everything myself.
>
> Sal: Of course, Andrew.
>
> Andrew: I got to prepare for that.
>
> Sal: You have to be content with who you are.
>
> Steven: Absolutely.
>
> Eddie: You got a care manager who's always going to make sure you get what you need, right?
>
> Andrew: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
>
> Sal: Yeah.[93]

This exchange captures their expressions of empathy that used language acknowledging the other's experience and expressed shared emotion. Although no one explicitly stated that they understood Andrew's experience, their expressions and the manner in which they communicated them demonstrated empathetic understanding. These types of acknowledgment expressions establish that empathy can be expressed through short verbal affirmations when participants have enacted mutual vulnerability through storytelling. These expressions of empathy seemed to emerge specifically when individuals in the dialogue told stories about similar experiences. It is through those similar experiences that shorter affirmative phrases carry enough meaning to acknowledge the other's experience or express shared emotions.

Other expressions of empathy emerged when participants engaged in back-and-forth conversation about comparable experiences. Language that expressed shared emotions and acknowledged the other's experience developed during a conversation focused on women's mental health co-sponsored by the Staten Island Partners for Community Wellness, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting public health initiatives that address both mental and physical wellbeing.[94] Tiana, a Queens native living on Long Island working as a security guard, revealed she experienced suicidal ideation because "my father didn't want me, my mother blamed me for everything." Ebony, a 29-year-old woman and mother, reciprocated Tiana's vulnerability, describing her strained relationship with her mother: "My mother didn't give two shits about me." Their analogous family situations resulted in them both seeking mental health support outside their homes as they learned that family was not a space for talking about their emotions:

> Ebony: …Black women, we hold our emotions. We don't feel like we need to—
>
> Tiana: Because we need to release those—[crosstalk]. We're labeled crazy.
>
> Ebony: Exactly. Crazy [crosstalk] or we're labeled something else…Exactly. We're the angry Black women label. We're the crazy psycho ones or she's crazy, she's ghetto, this is too much…

> Tiana: This is why I don't like that saying what happens—
>
> Ebony: Exactly.
>
> Tiana: —what happens in the home stays in the home because it's people in the homes sometimes you feel like you can't talk to them. If you go outside the home to talk to somebody, will help you.
>
> Ebony: No, sometimes you can't talk to your family. Sometimes you can't talk to your family. You can't have a conversation…
>
> Tiana: I understand how you feel because I'm the black sheep of my family. It's not really many I can talk to. I tried, you're judged. [crosstalk]. I remember I sat there one day and I talked to my cousins, my aunts and just let them know how I feel. The instant they thought I left, they *thought* I left, they started talking about me. I turned around and I walked back in the room and I was like, "Y'all really thought I left."
>
> Ebony: Exactly.[95]

Ebony and Tiana actively affirmed one another's experiences as they talked back and forth. They expressed empathy through acknowledgment of the other's experience and shared emotions based on their similar experiences as Black women and as people who did not feel supported when talking about their mental health with family members.

Even when participants were from different cultures, storytelling about similar social experiences within those different contexts fostered expressed empathy. In a conversation on the culture of NYC, Robin and Nayako discovered commonalities in their stories, despite their distinct ethnic backgrounds. Robin, a man in his late seventies, spent his career running one of Greenwich Village's cultural institutions: "For forty-one and a half years I owned The Cornelia Street Café, which is around the corner." Nayako is a young woman and journalist from Japan who was in NYC for the year to attend The City University of New York. Their analogous experiences happened before their lives in the United States. Nayako explained she was bullied as a child about the way she spoke because her family's frequent moves necessitated learning

new Japanese dialects. Years later, she studied anthropology in a Korean immigrant community in Japan:

> Korea had been colonized by Japan for a long time. That's the reason there are many Korean people in Japan. It's really deep rooted. I could kind of—I wanted to be together with them because I had the experience because of the subtle differences. I really want to fight against this, people's mindset to want to—how do you say that—exclude people with different features and different backgrounds.

Nayako's experience of being excluded by other school children made her interested in Korean immigrants' experiences of exclusion in Japan. Nayako's story prompted Robin to share his history growing up a as a Jewish refugee in post-World War II London:

> I went to school around the corner, but it wasn't until I went first to Sunday school and then joined the youth group of this little Jewish congregation, synagogue in Belsize Square, which had been founded by German Jews just before the war. Suddenly, this particular youth group, which was called—believe it or not—the Phoenix Risen from Ashes; where children who had been born into families who'd lost everything and everybody. Here we were suddenly at the age of 13 discovering a community to go back to…where everybody spoke the same language…We didn't have to, as we did at school, explain who we were and say, "Yes, my parents speak with a German accent, but no, they're Jewish, they're not the enemy, et cetera, et cetera." For a six-year-old, that's a very difficult thing to do. I very much responded to what you said. Because, as I said, I was on the other side of the curtain. I very much appreciate your reaching out to Koreans. No, I mean that's very important.

Robin valued Nayako's empathy for the Korean immigrant community and established a connection to his own childhood as an immigrant seeking community. He expressed empathy with Nayako based on shared emotions of exclusion and belonging, even though their stories took place in different cultural contexts.[96]

Others found connection through overlapping themes among their stories. They expressed empathy through shared emotions with the others even as the details of their stories differed. During a conversation about the schools and culture of Staten Island, Kim responded to stories relayed by Tashay and Barbara. Tashay discussed how their intersecting identities and

their experience being raised by a single mother who was a Middle Eastern Jewish immigrant shaped them. Barbara shared her story of disappointing her mother because she—a Jewish woman—married a Black man and had a son who was born with many disabilities. Kim used language to acknowledge their stories and build connection through her comparable experiences:

> I just find it interesting that the stories I'm hearing have a theme of displacement and feeling misunderstood and that's kind of what I was thinking of my own story. I feel that I have been in a lot of spaces and moved a lot. And depending on where I am, I find that people make assumptions about me or tell me who I am. And I think that I'm seeing and hearing a lot of that, just in general, right?[97]

Kim identified and affirmed the common themes that underpinned their stories. She expressed empathy based on the shared emotions they felt and articulated through their unique but comparable stories of existing outside the mainstream.

Even in a conversation among individuals with varying socioeconomic status, they uncovered shared experiences of living in their neighborhood that resulted in expressed empathy. Augustine, who was originally from England, moved to the United States in the 1980s and moved into the West Village the following decade where he raised his son and daughter. After hearing the other dialoguers bemoan changes to the neighborhood, specifically the loss of apartments to single family residences, Augustine told the story of how he came to live in the West Village: "It is interesting listening to these stories. I do feel like the yuppie that came in and destroyed the neighborhood. I did come here in 1993… Then the family and I acquired a house on Hudson Street, which really converted from a three-apartment building to a single-family house, which we saw as completely reasonable because that's what these buildings originally were." Augustine chose to be vulnerable by revealing he and his family had done what the others had previously critiqued. As the conversation unfolded Augustine and the others found they shared concerns about the behavior of tourists in the neighborhood. Maura, who moved to

Greenwich Village in the early ‘80s, expressed sincere appreciation about finding common ground with Augustine:

> Well I'd like to say that I'm glad to know that one of those people who did buy a multifamily home, and turned it into a single home, seems to be a very nice person. I'm sure that he and his family shop locally and whatever. And I'm glad that he, along with the rest of us, are on the same side of the issue as far as the Perry Street, *Sex in the City* hoards descending upon Perry Street. So I'm glad that there's some commonality and I don't feel terrible that he did that.[98]

Although her comment was a bit tongue in cheek, the wider context of the conversation made it clear that this was an expression of empathy. She used language that acknowledged Augustine's experience and even expressed understanding of his family's life in the Village. Maura extended empathy to Augustine because she got the opportunity to hear his story *and* because he shared her concerns about the tourists on Perry Street. Storytelling facilitated finding commonalities between participants from opposite backgrounds that enabled expressions of empathy through language that acknowledged the other's experience and expressions of shared emotions.

Degrees of Difference

Noticeably, self-other differentiation—the third tenet of empathy—is missing from each of these examples. Its absence makes sense given that each of these examples of expressed empathy grew out of discovering similar experiences with the other person. Therefore, the focus was on the sameness of the experiences rather than acknowledgement of how the individuals were different from one another. This focus on similarity raises questions about the degree of difference that existed between participants, the types of differences that existed, and what degree of difference is required for expressed empathy to be meaningful. A rare moment of self-other differentiation in expressed empathy captures that differences between participants *did* exist. During the first conversation in Harlem, Natalie, a lifelong Harlem resident who works in

the entertainment industry responded to a young woman who grew up in the Lincoln Projects in East Harlem and librarians involved in the conversation: "Well, I have similar—It's almost as if what I'm learning with this conversation so far is that we kind of grew up in different situations, but it's parallel to our own situations in terms of what we have a goal for basically."[99] Natalie recognized that each of the participants had different life experiences, but they shared values, such as wanting to give back to the community after experiencing poverty and wanting to keep community in Harlem strong.

Other conversations revealed greater differences between participants, such as a conversation held in the Bronx where one participant did not initially understand what the others were talking about. Neighborhood residents told stories about living in poverty and another resident, Isabelle, did not share those experiences. Isabelle lives in Mott Haven, having moved to the neighborhood from Canada to live with her partner—who moved to the neighborhood over ten years ago—to save money. Isabelle asked other dialoguers what they meant when talking about "Section 8," which is publicly subsidized housing. Pamela who was "born and raised in the Bronx all my life," Chanel, who lives "in the projects in Mott Haven," and Charles, a 17-year-old living in Pelham Bay who lived in a shelter with his mother when he was younger due to a domestic violence situation, told stories of living in poverty as they responded to Isabelle's question:

> Pamela: Section 8 is a subsidized housing. I have Section 8, and I've had it for 29 years. They have the working Section 8. If you make over, even if it's a dollar, you're no longer eligible for Section 8. It's a battle. It's a battle. You reside somewhere for a year, once that voucher's over, you have to leave and go back into the system. It's just not good and the rent is expensive. For that amount, a family of two, 1,300.
>
> Chanel: I feel like we, instead of living in this condition that I'm living in the projects, I feel like I could be living, paying the same rent, same amount of rent and be living in a better place. We never get the chance to move, so it's like—

> Charles: My mom has a job. She's a nurse, she rehabs for elderly people. She has a working job, but they weren't helping her. They shipped us, they told us to go all the way to Queens to a shelter place…It was gang violence [inaudible] I don't know how it was bettering my mom. I feel like she was mentally losing it too because we're staying in the Bronx, you tell us that you're going to help us and you just send us out to a worse place.
>
> Pamela: They just send you where they have space. That's how. I've been through that cycle myself with my parents. Me having my children…[100]

If Isabelle did not know the referent "Section 8," hearing stories from neighbors who lived in public housing likely expanded her understanding of the community in which she lived and demonstrated that neighbors within the same community can have greatly varied life experiences. Still, most of the conversation revealed and centered on participants' comparable life experiences.

It is perhaps unsurprising, that despite the diversity of NYC, participants easily found common experiences through their storytelling given that the NYPL hosted each of these conversations within specific neighborhoods and communities. Logically, participants living in the same neighborhood would have similar experiences with life in New York. In addition to how facilitators framed the conversation as an opportunity to establish connections, the mutual vulnerability enacted through storytelling *primed* dialoguers to connect through their similarities. These examples demonstrate the ability of storytelling as a tool for dialogue to build connection *and* engender expressions of empathy between community members.

The expressed empathy that consistently emerged in the LVN-NYPL conversations prompts questions about the value of expressed empathy based on analogous personal histories. I imagined expressed empathy as tool for dialoguing across ideological differences, likely based on individuals' standpoints. If participants consistently shared overlapping experiences, does that diminish the significance of their expressed empathy? I argue these examples demonstrate that building empathy across comparable experiences within a community is important work.

Empathy within community builds solidarity. Learning that other people in your neighborhood share similar experiences, values, and frustrations makes living together and democratic community possible. Finding commonalities provides a path forward when controversy or different perspectives eventually emerge. And it should not be overlooked that each of these conversations brought together different people; they just tended to draw similar conclusions about the needs of their communities. As José, who attended all six conversations hosted at the branch in his neighborhood, pointed out "at each one there were different people present."[101] Although only some participants disclosed identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, or socio-economic status, differences in these social positions clearly existed. These conversations reveal flaws in my original assumption that centered ideological difference when thinking about empathy's ability to elevate dialogue. To discount the expressions of empathy captured between the dialoguers in the LVN-NYPL conversations would undermine the value of these conversations, especially when considering the broader LVN model.

Spotlighting Underheard Voices

The value of expressed empathy based on shared experiences is shaped by the larger context of the NYPL LVN project. Every conversation is archived within the LVN digital database. It is meaningful community-building work to provide neighbors the opportunity to talk to and share stories with one another, but the fact that these conversations are also stored in a publicly accessible database extends the impact of the connections made and empathy expressed. Few conversations included local stakeholders with decision-making power. But powerful community leaders, such as politicians and journalists, can access these conversations, which capture the comparable experiences of often marginalized voices.

Importantly, LVN and NYPL captured underheard voices in line with their mission. Conversations were consistently held in communities that are often overlooked or ignored in public discourse. For example, LVN and the NYPL hosted a conversation in partnership with SapnaNYC, an organization that "serves low-income South Asian immigrant women" living in the Bronx.[102] Throughout the conversation the women connected over shared experiences as immigrants in the United States. In one exchange, Bangladeshi immigrants—Begum, a 63-year-old woman, Rebeya who came to the United States in 2014, and Nahida, who came to the U.S. in 2010—discussed the conundrum of being unable to get a job without experience:

> Begum: …give me hard thing. When I came Bangladesh in here, [inaudible] this country's dream country.
>
> Rabeya: Yes.
>
> Begum: I think now no dream country. They give me hard time. They making hard [inaudible :36].
>
> Rabeya: Too much hard.
>
> Begum: Too much hard. We don't want to accept this.
>
> Rabeya: Last month to go to the Popeye's now hiring… The manager says, "Do you have any experience," but I have no experience. I go to another shop and the manager says, "Do you have any experience." How can I get experience? I don't know.
>
> Begum: You no gave me job, how can I get the experience? Do you have five years' experience or ten years' experience? How can I grab the ten years' experience if you don't give me job?
>
> Rabeya: Yes.
>
> Nahida: True.[103]

The women found commonalities in their stories and expressed empathy through acknowledging the others' experiences and sharing frustration. Their consistent stories revealed a need for workforce development. As immigrants, the women could easily be ignored by political leaders or the media. The inclusion of their conversation in the LVN database makes their connections potentially more meaningful if listened to by people with institutional power or the ability to help

make change. Additionally, the women's analogous stories should make it less likely that community leaders could dismiss their experiences as an anomaly.

In another example of underheard voices, LVN and NYPL hosted a conversation with teenagers and young adults in Stapleton, Staten Island. The participants came to the conversation through a partnership with the New York Center for Interpersonal Development, a nonprofit focused on "conflict management, social-emotional learning, and youth and workforce development."[104] The young people discussed shared experiences of undercover police officers allowing "free" rides on the bus and then issuing a ticket for not paying:

> Elygah: When you ask for a ride on a bus, and then you got the undercovers that pull you off the bus.
>
> Yasmeen: Yo [crosstalk] I was lucky though.
>
> Elygah: Nah, nah, because they be like, "Yeah, come on you can get a ride," and then you can't get off. If you can't get a ride, say no, don't have us get on, and that's the thing that we need to fix too. You ask for a ride, "Yeah, yeah, get on, get on, get on." If that happens too, "Yeah, yeah, get on, come on," and then we get pulled off and get a ticket. Like, for what? Y'all could have just say no…
>
> Yasmeen: No, that had happen to some lady. I was lucky though, I [crosstalk :40]—
>
> Elygah: I mean, yeah, we supposed to have our fare, but still.
>
> Yasmeen: The cops got on the bus after I had already got on the bus.
>
> Wuanita: Yo, that's what I'm saying. Me and the lady that we got on the bus the same time. But she the one who got caught. I was like, you know what, I'm just not even going to say nothing. I'm going to just sit down.
>
> Jakari:[crosstalk] That happened to my man, Muhammad, opened the door for him, because he was [inaudible] one thing, but I opened the door, he walked in behind me and the cop grabbed him. I didn't even see, he was in full uniform too. He was in the cut though, I didn't even see him. I was like damn, he was tight. He had to pay 150 dollars.[105]

The participants felt like police officers tricked them into getting on the bus when they did not have bus fare, which could be harmful to police-community relations. The young adults used

language that acknowledged the others' experiences based on similar encounters with officers on the city buses. Again, these expressions of empathy stemmed from comparable experiences between young people whose voices may not be considered in policy dictating police practices. If journalists, police leaders, or politicians accessed the LVN database and listened to these young people's experiences, they might be able to address the issue of skipped fares in a different way or consider making other changes, such as lowering the rates or changing the way bus fares are collected. Interestingly, when asked what they would want officials to know, the participants responded that transportation fares should be lowered, or maybe even free, pointing out how the fares create additional hardship for people experiencing homelessness.

Finally, the recordings demonstrate how the conversations provided participants the opportunity to learn from one another, suggesting that—if local officials and journalists used the LVN database—it could be a powerful resource for helping them better understand their community members and the issues they face. For example, a conversation on schools in Harlem provided the opportunity for a white Jewish woman to learn from two Black female participants. Zee, a retired social worker who worked in the school system declared the public-school system to be "a disaster for African American children." Rose, a longtime and civically-engaged Harlem resident, discussed the challenges her son faced in the New York public school system and the work she had to do to advocate for him. Maureen listened to Zee and Rose's stories about their experiences with the public-school system and expressed that she learned from them:

> I was going to stay that I don't know what to say about schools because I don't have any children. I did not grow up in the neighborhood that I live in now. I don't have really any idea what the schools are like. There's two elementary schools near me, but I'm not involved at all in any of it because of the fact that I don't have any children. But I have to say, you're opening my eyes, and I'm very glad that you are. I feel terrible about some of the things that you both talked about. So we did not get any better in this country; it is the feeling that I'm getting. Is that true in terms of our relations?[106]

Maureen was moved by Zee and Rose's stories, expressing shared emotions of disappointment over the state of public education in Harlem, particularly for students of color. If participants within a neighborhood learned from their fellow community members and expressed empathy after hearing their stories, the LVN model of bringing these stories and conversations to individuals who have the power to make change could broaden their perspectives and cultivate empathy within them as well.

Conclusion

The LNV-NYPL conversations used a consistent structure where neighbors shared stories in response to questions about their lives in NYC. Facilitators used traditional facilitation practices to engage all participants and framed the conversations as an opportunity for building connections and finding commonalities. Facilitators primed participants to answer using personal narratives and, as a result, participants primarily articulated their answers through storytelling. As Laura Black mused in her research on storytelling in deliberative groups: "Stories seem to beget other stories."[107] Listening to one another's personal histories inspired participants to tell stories that created bonds over the similarities of their experiences. Consequently, the dialoguers consistently expressed empathy based on analogous experiences. The expressions of empathy used language that acknowledged the others' experiences and relayed shared emotions, but lacked self-other differentiation. These examples raised questions about the degree of difference required in order for expressed empathy to meaningfully improve dialogue. The LVN-NYPL examples demonstrate the value of expressed empathy based on analogous experiences between neighbors, despite the absence of self-other differentiation.

The examples of expressed empathy in this chapter differ from the CIC examples as they were second-person, rather than third-person, expressions of empathy. Instead of empathizing

with an imagined other outside the dialogue space, participants in the LVN-NYPL dialogues extended empathy to other participants with whom they were conversing. The structure for the LVN-NYPL conversations allowed participants to speak to and with one another, making second-person expressions of empathy possible. The focus on storytelling and connecting through personal narratives in the conversations also contributed to the emergence of second-person expressed empathy.

Neither the CIC nor the LVN-NYPL examples of expressed empathy included self-other differentiation. These examples reveal how this third tenet of expressed empathy is particularly difficult to facilitate. However, the second-person expression of empathy within the LVN-NYPL conversations made its absence less problematic than its absence from third-person expressed empathy, which functions primarily as a persuasive tactic. As I have argued, expressed empathy based on similar experiences between neighbors serves the epistemological purpose of community dialogues and sustains democratic communities. In his "Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows," John Koenig defines "exulansis: n. the tendency to give up trying to talk about an experience because people are unable to relate to it…"[108] This disengagement is antithetical to the goals of community dialogue and the NYPL-LVN project. Participants practiced vulnerability by sharing personal experiences with the other dialoguers. That those stories were met with language that acknowledged their experiences and expressed shared emotion likely made the vulnerability of telling that story feel worth it and reciprocated, and sustained the purpose of the conversation.

Of course, the broader significance of the participants' expressed empathy and the LVN-NYPL project rests on the choices of leaders and the ability of LVN to get people to listen to these conversations. As one skeptical participant from the Bronx noted in a conversation on

healthcare, there were existing grassroots and neighborhood efforts to get neighbors involved in improving the community:

> You're not gonna like what I have to say…We do this at our meetings…We discuss all these things at BPECA meetings, at AIM meetings, at Pelham Parkway Neighborhood Association, Van Nest, Morris Park, community board, precinct meetings…So this is kind of like, I'm not exactly sure the purpose of this, it's just redundant…I'm just not, I don't understand. The issue with the hospitals, we have been discussing this for many, many, for a long, long time with the nurses. We know what's going on. It's a mess."[109]

Certainly, the LVN-NYPL conversations did not provide the first opportunity for participants to come together to share their stories and perspectives. As Joan Blades and Parisa Parsa—who worked for Living Room Conversations and Cortico, respectively—noted in their reflection on local dialogue: "Even when they are undertaken with the best intentions of listening and responding to feedback…dialogue processes can actually breed distrust. Participants (especially those from historically marginalized groups) leave with the sense that this was just another time they were asked to tell their story with no meaningful result."[110] The conversations and participants expressions of empathy must reach committed community leaders in order for the LVN model to live up to its promises to its participants.

By establishing a digital archive, LVN wants to make attending and contributing to conversations more meaningful. If we assume conservatively that each of the NYPL conversations was 45 minutes long, the 98 existing recordings would require over 70 hours of listening. To date, the platform archives 784 conversations, with 4,103 voices across 71 collections, of which the NYPL is just one. As the database continues to evolve and grow, the features of the platform, including the highlighting tool (from participants themselves, community partners, and/or researchers) and thematic schemes, will become increasingly important for processing the scope and depth of the database.

Cortico established the LVN in response to polarized and fractured public conversations. A little over one year after the LNV-NYPL conversations began, the COVID-19 global pandemic turned the world upside down and exposed the dangerous consequences of our broken civic discourse. LVN and the NYPL halted in-person conversations in early March 2020 as public health officials advised individuals to stay home to avoid illness and spreading the virus. The library branches closed to in-person service at the same time, announcing they would stay closed until at least April.[111] Although the NYPL was able to resume some remote services and programming, such as Zoom sessions of the LVN conversations which started in July 2020, all branches did not fully re-open to patrons until July of the following year due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.[112]

As the pandemic raged on, New Yorkers experienced a radically different version of their bustling city as lockdowns kept people off the streets, while others fled the city, using remote work requirements as a chance to move closer to family or to find more affordable rent. People wondered: "Is New York City 'Over'?",[113] perhaps forgetting about the city's 2.5 million service workers who "helped keep New York alive in its darkest months."[114] As has always been the case, characterizing life in NYC is not simple. In the months following the in-person conversations analyzed in this chapter, the pandemic revealed startling cracks in society, the perils of fierce individualism over collective responsibility, and the primal need for human connection. In the next chapter, I explore practices that facilitated empathy in virtual dialogue in the midst of worldwide peril, isolation, and social unrest and disillusionment.

Chapter 2 Notes

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Chapter 3: The Affordances and Constraints of Kernel Stories as a Narrative Resource in a Pandemic Virtual Dialogue

> *"When you get immobilized by as horrible a thing as a deadly pandemic that's already killed 400 plus thousand people in this country alone and 2 million people at least globally, and you're completely locked down because of the safety concerns that it really makes you appreciate the simple things in life… So when we get back to normal, I think I will be one of hundreds of millions of people in this country that are going to start really appreciating the things that you kind of took for granted before."*
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> Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the Chief Medical Advisor to the President, January 26, 2021[1]

One year after the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the first case of COVID-19, "America's Doctor,"[2] Dr. Anthony Fauci, reflected on the impact of mass death and social isolation on our collective appreciation of everyday activities, like seeing family members or gathering for the holidays.[3] In early 2020, the global community began to take notice of rapidly spreading novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19. COVID-19 caused respiratory, pneumonia-like illness and quickly proved to be deadly and highly transmittable.

A Global Pandemic and Senseless Killing Shake the Nation

After its initial discovery in Wuhan, China, the virus appeared rapidly in countries around the world, causing the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare a public health emergency on January 31, just the sixth such declaration in the organization's history. Days later on February 3, the United States followed suit and declared a public health emergency, based on WHO data that 9,800 cases and more than 200 deaths had been confirmed worldwide. One month later, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic and President Donald Trump declared a

national emergency to allow for billions of dollars to be made available to try to stop the spread of the virus.[4]

Around this time in late March, "the world shut down."[5] Across the United States, cities, counties, and states issued "stay-at-home" orders designed to slow the spread of the virus based on guidance from public health officials. On March 23, nine statewide orders were in place. By April 20, all but five states had stay-at-home orders, meaning "at least 316 million people in at least 42 states, three counties, 10 cities, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico," were advised to stay home.[6] The CDC issued guidance for those leaving home to wear masks and to practice "social distancing," staying at least six feet away from others in public places.[7] Schools and workplaces deemed nonessential closed or moved online. These measures took place as cases of the virus overwhelmed hospitals short on personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators.[8] On March 20, Fauci told *TODAY*, "if you look at the trajectory of the curves of outbreaks in other areas it's at least going to be several weeks,"[9] referencing the anticipated course of the virus in the United States. On May 12, Fauci testified before the U.S. Senate warning against relaxing social distancing policies.[10] But Americans' patience grew thin as the U.S. unemployment rate hit 14.7 percent, the worst rate since the Great Depression,[11] and the Trump Administration provided states with plans for "phased reopening" in late May.[12] On May 28, the U.S. passed 100,000 deaths due to COVID-19, as the CDC continued to urge the public to practice public health measures, such as handwashing, mask wearing, and social distancing.[13]

The virus created an environment characterized by stress and anxiety. By summer, the chaos and uncertainty fueled mental health challenges for people of all ages, as unemployment, social isolation, and the lack of childcare or schooling made it difficult for people to manage their frustration and fears.[14] The CDC,[15] state health agencies,[16] health networks,[17]and

universities,[18] all provided advice for managing mental health during social isolation. People found a range of activities to manage the confinement and stress from taking masked walks or bike rides[19] to planning "virtual happy hours"[20] or virtual game nights[21] with family and friends via video conferencing software like Zoom.

Others ignored mask mandates and social distancing guidelines outright. People across the United States echoed the mantra "I refuse to live in fear" as they rejected public health guidance in the name of individual freedom. Attitudes towards masks and social distancing largely fell along party lines, with conservative and right-wing leaders and media flouting the guidance. President Trump himself fueled doubt about the severity of the virus, tweeting on March 9: "So last year 37,000 Americans died from the common Flu. It averages between 27,000 and 70,000 per year. Nothing is shut down, life & the economy go on. At this moment there are 546 confirmed cases of CoronaVirus, with 22 deaths. Think about that!" Republican politicians decried the shutdown of the economy and what they deemed an infringement of individual rights of the stay-at-home orders and mask mandates.[22] Anger boiled over as protestors across the country organized anti-mask and anti-stay-at-home rallies, many encouraged by right-wing conspiracy theories.[23]

Concurrently, more than a thousand protests against racial injustice took place on streets across the United States at the end of May into the month of June.[24] By April it was clear the pandemic was disproportionately impacting communities of color when the *Chicago Tribune* reported that African Americans made up 68 percent of deaths due to COVID-19 in Chicago.[25] Racism, access to quality healthcare, living situations, and the inability to work remotely contributed to this disparity.[26] The pandemic revealed the material consequences of racism in

America. This disproportionate impact of the virus compounded the unrest triggered by three high-profile murders of Black Americans: Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd.

Arbery, a 25-year-old Black man, was shot and killed by three white men who chased him down while he was on a run through their South Georgia neighborhood in late February. The men who killed Arbery claimed it was an act of vigilante justice because they suspected him of committing a series of break-ins that occurred in previous months in the neighborhood.[27] It took until late May—74 days later—for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to arrest the murderers after video footage of the shooting surfaced and sparked outrage over local law enforcement's decision to let the men walk free.[28]

In March, Louisville police killed Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, after raiding her apartment in the middle of the night. According to police, they received a warrant to enter Taylor's apartment without warning because they suspected two men involved in selling drugs used her apartment to get a package.[29] However, the police arrested five suspects, including Taylor's ex-boyfriend, before raiding Taylor's home. Taylor died after bleeding out from five gunshot wounds after three officers shot rounds through her apartment.[30] In May, the case drew national attention after the Kentucky governor called for prosecutors to review the police investigation of the shooting, citing Taylor's wrongful death and the botched execution of the warrant.[31]

Then on May 25 in Minneapolis, Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, murdered Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, by using his knee to pin a handcuffed Floyd to the ground for more than nine minutes. The police arrested Floyd for allegedly paying for cigarettes with a counterfeit $20 bill. A bystander captured video of Floyd begging for the officer to let him breathe and calling out for his mother. The voices of bystanders pleading for Chauvin to stop could be heard

in the background. The video went viral. Protests erupted in Minneapolis and then rapidly spread nationwide.[32]

The collective impact of these injustices, amplified by the horrific video footage of Floyd's death, sparked nationwide protests. Outraged and sorrowful, masked protesters flooded the streets amidst a global pandemic to declare "Black Lives Matter." Hundreds of thousands of people protested in more than 2,000 cities and rural small towns in every state across America.[33] The protests seemed to signal "America's Long Overdue Awakening to Systemic Racism"[34] as the size and spread of the protests made for the largest movement for "racial justice and civil rights in a generation."[35] Yet, Trump called the protestors "thugs" and tweeted "when the looting starts, the shooting starts." Later he threatened to send military troops to control the protests[36] and used tear gas to clear Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C. for a bizarre photo-op where he stood holding a Bible in front of St. John's Episcopal Church.[37] The protests also prompted positive federal action as the CDC established a "health equity framework" for its pandemic response.[38]

During this time of immense unease and turmoil, I received an email from Essential Partners, an organization whose training, "Facilitation for Community Engagement," I attended in June 2018. The email described a series of public virtual dialogues Essential Partners hosted in late March and early April with more than 300 participants from around the world. The organization designed the dialogues to help participants share "their fears and hopes for the future" and to find "strength and comfort in one another.[39] Formerly known as the Public Conversations Project, the organization "helps civic groups, faith communities, colleges, and organizations build resilience, belonging, and trust across deep divides of values, beliefs, and identities," through training dialogue facilitators, supporting community collaborations, creating

dialogue materials, and facilitating dialogues on contentious topics.[40] Essential Partners supported its network of members and trainees during the pandemic by providing materials for hosting virtual dialogues free of charge.

I reached out to the Dayton International Peace Museum to see if they would be interested in partnering with me to host a virtual dialogue for the Dayton, Ohio community. I worked with the Peace Museum previously as a volunteer moderating a panel on gun violence during the first Dayton Peace Festival held in October 2019.[41] The Dayton International Peace Museum was founded in 2004 by Daytonians honoring the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, which ended the Bosnian War. It is the only "brick and mortar" peace museum in the United States and is dedicated to inspiring "a local, national, and international culture of peace."[42] Beyond my existing relationship with the Museum, I felt moved to host a virtual dialogue in Dayton because the community was coping with the pandemic on the heels of a traumatic summer.

Hate, Natural Disaster, and Mass Murder Shake a Community

Summer 2019 witnessed a string of challenges and tragedies in Dayton. As one beleaguered resident stated: "Something just keeps happening."[43] It began with the Indiana Klu Klux Klan (KKK) announcing a downtown Dayton rally during Memorial Day weekend. The event drew national attention as only nine KKK members showed up compared to the estimated five to six hundred nonviolent counter-protestors.[44] While the event was celebrated for its unifying anti-hate message, the city spent roughly $650,000 to provide enough safety personnel in case larger numbers of white supremacists arrived.[45] Then just two days later, a "record-breaking tornado outbreak" tore across southern Ohio.[46] On the night of Memorial Day, several tornadoes touched down in highly populated areas of the city and county. Area residents heeded early shelter warnings, and miraculously, no one died. The tornado damage, however, was

severe.[47] Statewide assessments of total economic loss were estimated to reach nearly one billion dollars and determined that the tornado destroyed 1,177 structures and damaged 5,699 more in Montgomery County.[48]

Just two months later, tragedy in Dayton made national headlines again. Shortly after 1:00 am on August 4, a 24-year-old white man living in a suburb of Dayton used an AR-15-style rifle to shoot 26 people in 32 seconds, at which point he was shot and killed by police. The shooter—who had a history of obsession with violence, and violence against women—killed nine people and injured 17 others at a bar in Dayton's popular historic Oregon District.[49] The "Dayton Strong" t-shirts, initially printed after the tornadoes, were suddenly given devastating new meaning.[50] The following Monday, I went to lunch with my family in the Oregon District a few doors down from where the shooting took place to show our support of the local businesses. We ran into Mayor Nan Whaley who sat eating with her staffers heartbroken, but resilient. Like Whaley, the city remained "a symbol of grit, a beacon of perseverance"[51] to its "140,000 residents who have endured more trauma this year than many larger cities experience in a decade."[52]

Seven months later, news on the national scene affected Dayton when the Ohio governor issued a statewide a stay-at-home order in March.[53] In April, Whaley joined a coalition of mayors calling for increased federal aid to help smaller cities manage the COVID-19 pandemic and its financial impacts.[54] Like elsewhere, Dayton residents responded to the lockdown and the pandemic differently, some most concerned about catching the virus, while others worried for their businesses.[55] Daytonians also joined the nationwide Black Lives Matter protests on local streets in late May and early June.[56]

Amidst this unsettled national and local milieu, I hosted a virtual dialogue in partnership with Dayton International Peace Museum on June 8, 2020. In what follows, I outline the process of launching the virtual event and Essential Partners model for this dialogue. I then use kernel stories as theoretical framework to show how participants built on one another's stories to express empathy through shared emotions and acknowledgment of the others' experiences. Although I argue the stories functioned therapeutically, I use an exchange in one small group to raise questions about the narrative conforming consequences of kernel stories and situations when the predominant kernel does not reflect a participant's experiences.

Essential Partners Model for the Virtual Dialogue

Essential Partners provided scripts and resources for facilitators, hosts, participants, and technology support for the virtual dialogue. Materials included email templates for communicating with participants and facilitators, scripts for the host and facilitators, handouts with the communication agreements and questions, and PowerPoint slides for training facilitators. I used these materials as they were provided, making only minor edits to acknowledge my partnership with the Dayton International Peace Museum.

To recruit participants for the dialogue, the Dayton International Peace Museum advertised the virtual event on their social media pages and sent out an email to their listserv. I shared the advertisements with my professional networks and on my personal social media pages. Essential Partners spotlighted the event on their blog. Ahead of the dialogue, participants received a letter indicating its purpose, reflection questions, the communication agreements for the conversation, and a consent form. In accordance with IRB and participant consent, all names have been changed in the examples included in this chapter. In total, 23 participants attended the

virtual dialogue, along with five small group facilitators and a technology support person, and I served as the host.

To prime participants for the Essential Partners "Reflective Structured Dialogue" approach, the welcome letter asked them to consider three brainstorming questions: (1) "what are your stories of overcoming challenges"; (2) "how would your best friend describe your great strengths"; and (3) "who or what in your life has taught you to have resilience." The welcome materials also asked participants to consider what they would need to do to prepare for "an openhearted conversation with people you don't know" and to find a setting that would help them stay focused during the dialogue. The communication agreements created by Essential Partners asked participants to speak from their own experience, follow time limits, respect confidentiality, take turns, and gave them the option to "pass or pass for now."

Following Essential Partners' recommendation, I led a thirty-minute facilitator training before the start of the dialogue. The facilitators were responsible for holding small group discussions in Zoom breakout rooms. I recruited five university colleagues with experience and interest in facilitation to help with the event. The training reviewed the facilitator script—which I sent out ahead of time—and provided tips for facilitating in an online environment. The Essential Partners training emphasized that facilitators should closely follow the provided scripts to ensure a consistent experience in the breakout rooms. The facilitators kept time and provided cues for participants, but did not join in the conversation. The script explicitly stated: "I will not participate in the dialogue. My role as a facilitator is to hold the space for dialogue by guiding the conversation, holding the group accountable to the communication agreements, and making sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate." Therefore, the facilitators did not answer the questions or engage in the discussion.

The dialogue was 90 minutes long. It began with a 15-minute whole group introduction. Then participants met in their small groups for an hour and ten minutes. All participants were brought back to the whole group for a final five-minute wrap up. I began the event with a welcome message and articulated the hopes for the dialogue:

> I initially partnered with the Dayton International Peace Museum to plan this virtual dialogue to create a space for people to connect and find community during social distancing and the COVID-19 pandemic. With the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery and the unending history of violence against Black people in the United States necessarily at the center of our collective attention, we've expanded our vision for this dialogue. Therefore, I'd like to acknowledge that the collective trauma that has been experienced by Black Americans and those most vulnerable in the United States, may make this conversation particularly difficult.

The purpose of the dialogue was to provide a space for participants to "connect across distance" about the challenges of living in social isolation. Ideally, participants could use the space to establish connections to help sustain them during a difficult moment in time.

I outlined the structure of the event and assigned each participant to a breakout room. There were five breakout rooms with four to five participants and one facilitator per room.[57] The small group sessions began with a review of the communication agreements and a brief round of introductions. Facilitators asked each participant to share "in the span of one breath" their name and a connection sustaining them. Then participants answered two questions in a go-around fashion:

(1) Tell us about a time in your life when you've found the strength or internal resources to overcome some challenge, either personal or professional? What strengths, skills, or relationships did you draw upon to overcome that challenge?

(2) How did your experiences in that situation shape who you are now? How might you call upon your internal strengths and resources in the midst of this new challenge?

For each question, the facilitators gave the participants two minutes to silently reflect, two minutes to answer, and thirty seconds after everyone spoke to jot down any questions they had

for others based on what they just heard. Facilitators used a timer to help participants stick to the time limits. To manage the Zoom environment, facilitators provided speaking order and asked everyone to take a breath between each response.

After participants answered both questions, the facilitators introduced the "Questions of Genuine Curiosity." In this segment, participants conversed with their small group members in an unstructured setting; facilitators did not intervene. They introduced this section by encouraging all members to "either ask or answer a question of genuine interest" emphasizing that "curiosity is the best path to better understanding." The option to pass or pass for now remained. This free-form segment lasted approximately 15 minutes. The breakouts ended with another go-around where participants were given the chance to make any special confidentiality requests and each answered, "what are you taking from what you heard here that you want to keep with you as you go into the rest of this week?" The dialogue ended when the small groups returned to the main Zoom room for brief closing comments.

Expressed Empathy and Narrative Conforming through Kernel Stories

The Essential Partners approach drew on everyday communication practices. The questions primed participants to answer using stories. Using stories aligns with the epistemic goals of dialogue. Walter Fisher asserted that "narratives enable us to understand the actions of others."[58] We can learn about others—their reasons, perspectives, values, and goals—through the stories they tell. As Fisher observed, "humans are essentially storytellers."[59] Stories are a way of making sense of the world that people learn naturally, thus making them useful frameworks for communicating ideas and experiences.[60] Participants told stories to answer the first go-around question about a time they overcame a challenge. Typically, participants drew on specific memories, although some shared fewer details about their experiences than others. In

Breakout Room 1, participants told stories of personal hardship and family. A white middle-aged woman named Katherine described being a mother of young children when her husband experienced heart complications:

> I had a three-year-old son and I was pregnant with my daughter and my husband had to go into the hospital because he was diagnosed with a heart defect. And it was, you know, pretty scary, having two young children and having something unknown happening. And there was question of whether he, at the age of 37, needed open heart surgery. And at the time, I had been doing a gratitude journal. And so every day, at the end of the day, I would write five things I was grateful for. And I remember getting home and being exhausted and getting home from the hospital and thinking, I'm not sure I can do this tonight. And getting down and then just, you know, realizing so many things that I was grateful for, and having all of these people in my life that I could lean on, and being able to reach out to family and having them who aren't here in town and having them be able to come quickly and having the distraction of my young children, my young child, and being pregnant, and needing to take care of myself and it all fell into place a whole lot easier than I ever expected at the time.[61]

Katherine's story centered on a specific memory of displaying resilience. Other participants told broader stories rather than recall a singular moment to answer the question. Angela, whose camera was off, shared:

> I had to move due to gentrification. I'm a low wealth person; I had to move. I had been stationary in the same place for over 20 years. And with low wealth, being able to move in a short period of time is impossible. But through a lot of help from a lot of different people. I was able to move but it was a stressful move for everybody in my house and some of us deal with mental health issues and dealing with the move and everything was chaotic.[62]

Although the depth and details differed, the participants used basic narrative structures to share their stories with others. Whether "history, biography, or autobiography," Fisher contended people use the "stories we tell ourselves and each other to establish a meaningful life-world."[63] Essential Partners' storytelling model was an effective approach given the chaos of the pandemic and civil unrest unfolding at the time of the virtual dialogue.

Fisher forwarded storytelling as a mode of communication for learning more about others. He argued: "To consider that public-social knowledge is to be found in the stories that we tell one another would enable us to observe not only our differences, but also our commonalities."[64] Fisher identified storytelling's potential for finding commonalities, and as the subsequent examples demonstrate, commonalities resonated in the stories told during the virtual dialogue. It seems *in practice* when telling stories people gravitate toward those commonalities. In the go-around session in Breakout Room 4, participants drew similarities in their experiences. Jonah, a forty-something white man, began by telling his story of living abroad:

> For two years, I was academically unemployed and following my wife, who was employed, to several countries outside of the US...[this] created all sorts of self-doubt and wondering whether it was worth trying to continue to be an academic and continue work. And the second move was particularly bad because I thought I was going to get a position then did not. And so it was really that situation where my wife was the one who encouraged me to find a way to volunteer in this new society that I was in…And that was extremely rewarding in all sorts of ways, because I think I was socially isolated in a context where there was not mandatory social isolation, it was just the isolation of being a foreigner in a new country without institutional support or established friends...[65]

Jonah used storytelling to narrate his experience and capture the emotions he felt. Another participant then framed her own story by building on a common thread she saw in their experiences. Dionne began: "I am the first in my family to have gone to college or attended college. And it was a very challenging thing when you have no one who can tell you what this is about, so to speak. To what Jonah said about being in a foreign country, that's what it was like, and getting to know the language of academics and the expectations of academics and being African American."[66] The natural tendency to build on commonalities through storytelling created the connections the dialogue was designed to make.

To help make sense of the patterns that emerged in the stories shared during the virtual dialogue, I turn to Susan Kalčik and Tasha Dubriwny's research on storytelling in consciousness-

raising groups during Second Wave Feminism. Kalčik theorized how stories unfolded in consciousness-raising groups identifying what she termed "kernel stories." Kernels and kernel stories are "emergent structures" that shape subsequent discussion when a person articulates a single idea and then stories unfold from that idea. Kalčik explained: "Most often a kernel story is a brief reference to the subject, the central action, or an important piece of dialogue from a longer story. In this form one might say it is a kind of potential story...It might be clearer to call this brief reference the *kernel* and what develops from it the *kernel story*."[67] The singular reference, the "kernel," either prompts further development, growing into a kernel story or it is left unaddressed. If a kernel is picked up, the storyteller elaborates, expanding upon their story in response to specific questions or expressed interests from those listening. According to Kalčik, "kernel stories may be developed by adding exposition and detail or by adding nonnarrative elements such as a rationale for telling the story; an apology; and analysis of the characters, events, or theme; or an emotional response to the story."[68]A kernel may go unaddressed if the speaker decides not to elaborate or if the conversation moves on to other participants in another direction.

Fisher's narrative paradigm framework helps elucidate why certain kernels are picked up by others as emergent frameworks for conversation and why others remain mostly unaddressed or unexplored. According to Fisher, narrative probability considers "what constitutes a coherent story" and narrative fidelity considers "whether the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives." Fisher argued stories with strong narrative probability and fidelity are more persuasive and influential.[69] As Kalčik observed, "many of these kernels do not develop beyond the first stage into kernel stories."[70] Presumably kernels do not develop if they their narrative probability or fidelity are low; a kernel is unlikely to chain out if others do

not understand the story or if the story is not relevant or familiar to their own lives. Kernels can also act as kernels for other participants' stories, however, if they are salient to their personal experience. Dubriwny used Kalčik's theory of kernel stories to explain the storytelling practices of women during a consciousness-raising panel led by the feminist collective the Redstockings during their 1969 Abortion Speak-Out. As Dubriwny explained: "individual women would tell a brief story about their experiences. Then, another woman would pick up on some aspect of the previous story to tell others about her own experiences," with each participant "building on the stories of others."[71] Dubriwny explained how kernels could be picked up by other people when commonalities exist.

During the virtual dialogue, participants' stories acted as kernels which others picked up and elaborated on. Importantly, the kernels became the mechanism through which participants expressed empathy for one another, specifically using language that acknowledged the other's experience and expressed shared emotion. The kernels acted as a narrative resource for the participants to express empathy over their comparable experiences. For example, in Breakout Room 2, divorce served as kernel that dominated the Questions of Genuine Curiosity portion of their small group conversation. The kernel first emerged during two participants' answers to the opening question. Thomas, a young white man, answered first, identifying his parents' divorce as the challenge he overcame:

> So a challenge that's been big in my life was my parents' divorce when I was 19, I was finishing up my freshman year of college—it was about a month before I finished when I found out my parents were going to get a divorce. So that was really hard for me and for my three siblings…I really didn't have much connection with my parents during that time. But relationships that helped me through the challenge were going and sort of connecting with my three siblings and processing with each other and engaging in that healing together....[72]

Debbie, an older white woman, followed:

> They're going to think that we arranged this ahead of time because the challenge that I thought of was when I was coming to the very painful decision to divorce my husband after not quite 21 years of marriage, and my eldest would have been your same age when he and his three younger siblings to go through it, unbelievable. I knew no one who was divorced, I had had no template for this at all. I didn't believe in divorce necessarily, but I knew the situation that we, my family and myself were in was wrong…I had to have the courage to do what I knew was really the right thing, even though according to all of the norms, it was absolutely the wrong thing for me to be doing...[73]

These stories of divorce, though from different positions, provided a kernel that was the predominant topic of the free-form segment. Notably, the facilitator script encouraged using kernels as a resource for making connections during this portion of the dialogue: "We've all had experiences being asked questions that feel like statements, like judgments, or like thinly veiled advice – but we've also had experiences being asked questions where we feel invited to share more, to think more deeply, or to see things in new ways." Facilitators welcomed participants to ask one another questions that would allow kernels to develop.

The other two participants in the breakout room shared stories about overcoming hardships in school and in their professional lives. Therefore, when the facilitator introduced the unstructured section of the conversation, the kernel initially acted as an emergent structure for just Thomas and Debbie. Thomas asked the first question:

> One thing that has been a struggle for my family with my parents' divorce has been the relationship between my parents has been, you know, it's been six or seven years now, they still have a really hard time relating to each other in a meaningful way. So I was wondering if you're open to sharing, if you and your ex-spouse were able to find a way to relate to each other that felt meaningful for you after you separated?[74]

Thomas's question gave Debbie the chance to develop the kernel of her initial story. In some ways, his question was a request for more information that might help him make sense of his own story. He wanted to understand how Debbie managed the piece of his parents' divorce that he still found the most difficult to manage. His expression of interest allowed Debbie to

elaborate, demonstrating Kalčik's theory of how kernel stories develop. Debbie answered, "The short answer is yes, it does get better. Not right away."[75] Debbie responded with expressed empathy. Although her statement did not explicitly articulate the emotions Thomas displayed, her expression and tone acknowledged the pain of divorce and offered a bit of hope. She built on this kernel of divorce:

> We tried to keep our anger in and hurt with each other between us and, and not bounce it through our children, because again, our divorce had nothing to do with them. And it helps that I have now been divorced from my first husband longer than we were married...And in fact, one of the things that pushed me toward divorce was that I was more afraid of what I was teaching my children about marriage, by remaining in that marriage, than what I would maybe teach them by finding a way to end that marriage...What I wondered for you, Thomas, was, have you found a way to forgive your parents for divorcing and upending your life?[76]

Debbie reciprocated Thomas's gesture that allowed her to expand upon her story. Like Thomas, her question seemed to be looking for an answer to her biggest concern about her divorce: that her children could not forgive her. Thomas answered honestly:

> In terms of forgiving my parents I have. You know, there are times where it's still really difficult...I have a good relationship with both of them. I think the part where I'm still struggling to forgive is their—it's hard to forgive their ongoing unwillingness or inability to put aside their negative feelings for each other and, you know, be able to be present with all their children in the same place when we're doing something like graduating or have a birthday or a holiday. But that's something that, you know, we continue to work on. That's a continuing struggle.[77]

Thomas answered candidly and revealed the conflict he felt; logically he forgave his parents, but he expressed continued disappointment with their inability to rise above conflict during important family events. The first part of his answer seemed to be a move to express empathy by demonstrating to Debbie that children do forgive their parents because he understood their decision. Then by expanding upon his kernel story, he gave Debbie another chance to express empathy for him. She responded by using language that acknowledged his experience and

demonstrated understanding of his disappointment: "Yeah, I can see where that would be...eventually it works out, but the first few years are very difficult."[78] Interestingly, their interaction aligned with their roles in their families. Thomas's questions for Debbie were kind-hearted and sincere, almost child-like, while Debbie assumed a motherly tone in the dialogue. Her situation with her divorce was long resolved, both partners remarried, and as she later revealed, her children came to understand her decision. She was positioned to provide Thomas with reassuring language that expressed empathy for his ongoing attempt to process his parent's divorce. The exchange wrapped up when Debbie reciprocated Thomas's vulnerability: "And I will say that the worst day of my life still—and I've been through a bunch of stuff in 69 years—but the worst day of my life was the day we sat down to tell our children that we were getting divorced."[79] Elaborating on their kernels allowed Debbie and Thomas to practice mutual vulnerability.

As Thomas and Debbie expanded upon their stories with greater detail and deeper feelings, the dialogue unfolded following the pattern Kalčik and Dubriwny posited. The initial kernel of similar family divorce scenarios connected Thomas and Debbie and prompted an exchange that led to them revealing vulnerable details about their experiences. These additional details provided a kernel for the other two participants in the dialogue to take up. Rosa, a younger woman of color, who in response to the first question—identified her husband as the connection that was sustaining her, expressed interest in a kernel that emerged in the exchange between Debbie and Thomas. She asked Debbie what she wanted her children to learn about marriage. Debbie replied:

> I wanted my children to see marriage is a partnership between people who genuinely love and care for each other. And things had gotten to the point between my husband at the time and myself that neither one of us clearly felt loved and supported in the way we felt we needed to be...[that] was not something that I wanted my children to think defines

> marriage. So I wanted them to see that, you know, sometimes you give it your best shot, but you have to call it quits and hopefully, they will see at least one of us find the kind of relationship that I think a marriage should be.[80]

Although Rosa did not use the interaction to expand upon her own story, she demonstrated genuine curiosity about Debbie's view of a good marriage and seemed to take her answer to heart. When everyone shared their takeaways at the end of the small group session, Rosa's response included a reflection on marriage: "And also partnerships through marriage. I am married so I will keep thinking that and hearing it from somebody with lived experience kind of put it more in there."[81] Rosa found the lessons of marriage to be meaningful reminders for her life.

Colleen, a middle-aged white woman and the fourth participant in Breakout Room 2, also contributed to the conversation after hearing Debbie elaborate on her divorce story. Although Colleen had not mentioned divorce when answering the go-around questions, this kernel was salient to Colleen's own divorce experience. She empathized with Debbie who felt conflicted when deciding to divorce. Colleen expressed empathy for Debbie by acknowledging the experiences they had in common: making the hard decision to get divorced and the deeply difficult emotions that came with that decision. Debbie's kernel story resonated with Colleen who asked: "A decision that I made to divorce years ago, which I know was the best thing, and it's turned out that way for the two people that were most affected by it… But you know, I still feel a certain amount of judgmental attitudes throughout like the extended family. I'm wondering, do you feel like you get any of that from your extended family at all?"[82] Colleen's question followed a pattern of participants seeking reassurance or connection through commonalities. Colleen's expressed interest in Debbie's experience prompted Debbie to respond with new details about her divorce:

> I think at first, my extended family was mystified because I had not shared some of what I was going through. And when I first started to share it, they were like, he did that? Who? It's like yeah, well, let me tell you what he did...But I finally just got to the point where I thought the last gift I am able to give to this relationship is to be the "bad guy" and initiate the divorce, because clearly it needs to happen and so "okay I'll be the bad guy." I will say that being seen as "the bad guy" lasted a little longer than I thought it was going to, but you know? Still, it was worth it, and I do think—and I think even our children think now—much further along than your family is Thomas, I think they see it as is having been the right decision too, but it was intensely painful at the time.[83]

Debbie's answer provided Colleen new kernels to pick up and prompted Colleen to share her own divorce story. Colleen related to the idea of family not really understanding what was going on in the marriage and with the idea of being perceived negatively. She replied:

> You know listening to you say that, it's bringing up a lot of memories because I was the bad guy, I was the one that made this decision. But I'll never forget, when I sat down to have that conversation with him, that moment when told him I was leaving, it was like the mask came off of his face and I saw the relief wash over his face and I will never forget that, you know? And just listening to you I realize the people I'm talking about in my extended family have never had that conversation with me, have never even asked; they just assumed, you know. So yeah it's really enlightening to listen to what you had to say.[84]

Colleen elaborated on the kernels in Debbie's divorce story that reflected her own experience. The divorce kernel chain continued despite the women's varied experiences. Colleen's husband responded with relief to her divorce proposal; Debbie's did not, which she revealed in her reply:

> He used to talk about, "well maybe we shouldn't be married" you know "maybe this was a mistake" and I was always one saying, "oh no, honey, we can do this"…So I when finally said, "you know what you're right, this not working, we need to do something else." Wrong answer. And then things really got bad because then he was convinced I was going to leave, and eventually I did. But you know one person can't hold together a relationship, it can't be done.[85]

Colleen's conversation with her husband encouraged Debbie to share more details about how her marriage ended. Colleen then used language that acknowledged the immense emotional burden the two women carried trying to sustain unhappy marriages. She empathized: "It's amazing what

we will put on ourselves, like you said this idea that 'oh I have to fix it. I have to make it, you know, the best for both of us.' And like you don't. You can't. That's not realistic and it takes a lot of living to get that understanding."[86] Debbie and Colleen's exchange demonstrated how they responded to the kernels in each other's stories and built on one another's experience. The kernel chain acted as a narrative resource that enabled the women to express empathy through language that acknowledged the other's experience and validated the other's emotions.

The kernel stories that unfolded over the course of the dialogue in Breakout Room 2 demonstrate how storytelling functioned as a mechanism for establishing connections and expressing empathy over similar experiences and emotions. Interestingly, throughout the conversation, participants' responses included the filler phrase "you know." This pattern across Thomas, Debbie, and Colleen's responses perhaps captures the spirit of what they sought from the dialogue: to be understood, to connect, and to have someone validate how they felt. The role of kernels and kernel stories in the virtual dialogue paralleled their function in the consciousness-raising groups Kalčik and Dubriwny studied, with the exception that consciousness-raising groups used storytelling as a means of political action and theory building, while the end goal of the virtual dialogue was connection. Storytelling functioned therapeutically during the virtual dialogue. Participants gravitated toward the kernels with personal salience, resulting in stories that chained out of commonalities in their experiences.

The dialogue in Breakout Room 3 followed a similar chaining pattern based on a salient kernel: faith. Each of the female participants' answers to the go-around questions included religious references. Gloria, an older Black woman, listed "something that the minister says during his Sunday message" as an example of what gives her "inner strength" and disclosed that she believes she should "leave it to a higher power" when things are outside of her control.[87]

Jennifer, a middle-aged white woman, identified her Christian faith as what sustains her, and shared that in challenging moments she tries to "be patient and listen, pay attention to what's going on within me, and also, you know, what's going on with my higher power."[88] Amber, an older Black woman, referenced a "higher power" and explained "faith and prayer and reading helps me in times of crisis. And I just have to have a faith to believe that things will get better. And I've seen a lot of crisis. So I just believe during the crisis, things will get better and I just depend on my faith to get me through and the prayers of other people who believe like I do."[89] Then Barbara, a 69-year-old white woman, discussed her faith, sharing a heartbreaking story of loss:

> I guess the most challenging experience in my life was the death of my husband when he was only 30. And I was 27. And I was pregnant. And had no experience with that at all. So, you know, 42 years later, it's not hard to talk about, but at the time, it was devastating. And I'm trying to think of how I got through it. Faith was a big piece, although it came at a time when I was questioning my faith also. So that was an interesting growth time; I found out what I really believed, instead of what I thought I believed.[90]

Barbara revealed she questioned her faith, but later found a new faith community she relies on today: "I guess it's the old, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, and to understand that you have that strength in you. And I think faith is a big piece of that, to understand that there's that little spark of the divine in every one of us, even when we don't really feel particularly divine."[91] A faith kernel emerged in each of these four participants' stories in response to the prompts about finding inner strength.

The final participant Will, a 29-year-old white man, however, focused not on faith but on individual strength. He answered: "I'd like to say that I relied on other people as support during that time, but I don't think I'd be honest if I was saying that…What I've tried to do is just focus on two things: focus on things that I can control… [and on] some kind of some self-

improvement."[92] Faith was not a kernel in Will's story. Rather his story identified individuality and self-reliance as his central resources for managing challenges. His coping mechanisms contrasted with the women's approach of seeking external support through their belief in God. This example raises questions about the consequences of kernel stories when a person's experience falls outside the normative experience articulated in the other stories.

During the Questions of Genuine Curiosity, faith continued as a kernel that developed in the dialogue as participants questioned one another about key details in their stories. For example, Jennifer asked Barbara directly about her crisis of faith, prompting Barbara to elaborate on the faith kernel in her story of personal hardship. Barbara got emotional as she explained how she began to question the values of the faith tradition in which she was raised. Her monsignor then encouraged her to explore other churches, which gave Barbara the "freedom to go" and find a tradition that turned out to be "a great fit."[93]

Will asked Amber about the advice she provided to "don't stress and don't panic," admitting that guidance is difficult for him to follow. He wondered, "how do you get yourself to believe that so you don't actually panic and you do remain calm?"[94] Although he did not ask Amber about her faith, that kernel was at the heart of her response. She replied: "I begin to pray with other people of faith. Also, I talk to other people and read books of encouragement and just believe that it's gonna get better. Sooner or later."[95] Amber expressed how prayer and faith in a better tomorrow kept her calm. Later in the segment, Amber asked Will a direct question based on the faith kernel: "Will, do you believe that the problems that are currently going on in the world will be resolved? Do you have enough faith to believe that?"[96] Will struggled to answer, using halting speech and incomplete thoughts as he formed his response:

> Yeah, I believe that—it's hard to see the—well, maybe I don't believe that. I'm dealing with that right now. I'd like to say that I believe that, but I guess sometimes I struggled to

> convince myself. So yes, I'd like to say yes, but obviously if I can't say that—if I can't say that right away, then there's some doubt…I do—I do practice a faith and just sometimes it's—some days it's a little bit stronger than others. Just kind of putting things and just knowing that it's out of my control. So yes, but I'm also working on it.[97]

Will's answer expressed a degree of doubt; he did not view the world with the same faith-driven optimism as Amber. In response to Amber's direct inquiry, however, Will used the faith kernel as he stammered, "I do practice a faith." Assuming best intent in her question, Amber expressed empathy by genuinely seeking to understand Will's perspective and emotions. But ultimately, this moment illustrated the conforming power of kernels in dialogic settings. The faith kernel chain throughout the conversation potentially contributed to Amber feeling comfortable enough to ask Will about his point of view and potentially influenced Will's answer. The kernel acted as a narrative resource, but anyone observing the conversation might wonder if Will felt compelled to use that kernel as a defense or deflection in his response. Although Amber's question did not explicitly address faith, the religious overtones of the conversation and the previously expressed importance of faith to the women made the faith kernel seem fundamental to her question. It is unsurprising then that Will used this kernel in his reply.

Will also picked up the faith kernel when he shared his takeaway at the end of their small group session: "Some very strong things I'll take with me this week: The first one, which is going to be my motto that I wrote down a sticky note is, 'tomorrow, the sun will rise.' So, Barbara your story's very powerful to me…no matter how bad it gets, the sun comes up tomorrow…and then broadly, just faith and the importance of keeping the faith and taking one step at a time."[98] Will's final contribution conformed to the kernels that were salient to the other small group participants. Will could have focused on elements of the other's stories that more closely aligned with his own practices for managing challenges: locus of control, self-reflection, and thinking about what you want and writing it down. Still, he included the faith kernel that

appeared in each of the other participants' stories, further demonstrating this kernel's influence in shaping the dialogue.

Interestingly, Gloria's takeaway directly addressed the differences between Will's and the women's stories. Gloria reflected on generational approaches to faith:

> Well, for my observation, I guess, I think Will is probably about the same age as my son, just from observation. And it's interesting because the ladies in the group are kind of in the same age range and I did hear a lot of expressions of faith and there's some religious orientation here. I didn't hear that so much from Will, and if I match him with my son, I would not hear that from my son either. So it's kind of interesting to me, with all the things going on now with the younger set, the ones coming to take our place. I'm not sure what they grab hold to when they face a lot of issues or things that it's hard to handle. I don't—my son's well educated, but there's only so far that the academics can take you. So I just kind of, it's going to be interesting to see how it all unravels with this younger generation coming up and ready to take hold of things. What are they going to fall back on when things really feel like they're going out of control?[99]

Even as Will incorporated the faith kernel, Gloria identified the hesitation in his responses and the absence of faith in his stated approach to managing challenges. Gloria did not necessarily judge Will as she drew comparisons to her son, but she worried about what the absence of faith in the younger generation might mean for them when facing difficulties.

The conversation that unfolded in Breakout Room 3 complicated the possibilities of kernels as narrative resources for expressing empathy. When participants uncovered similarities in their stories, the kernels chained into fully developed kernel stories and participants expressed empathy through language that acknowledged the other's experience and expressed shared emotions. However, the kernels also had a conforming influence over conversations. The women in Breakout Room 3 had a kernel in common, so they elaborated on it. For Will, however, the kernel seemed to be less salient. Did Will include references to faith in his responses because faith was a meaningful part of his experience? Or did he feel pressured to include faith in his replies in order to conform his experience to the kernel that seemed most relevant to the other

participants? Additionally, while the predominant kernel did not appear to deter Will from participating in the conversation, it seems possible that a participant could be reluctant to participate in the dialogue if their experiences did not reflect the kernel most salient to others.

To better understand why dialogue conforms around kernels and the consequences of this pattern, I return to Fisher. Citing Kenneth Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Fisher contended, "the operative principle of narrative rationality is identification."[100] In order for stories to make sense to others there must be a degree of sameness between the storyteller and their audience. The kernels that chained in the virtual dialogue were identifiable to many of the participants. For a kernel to have a high degree of narrative probability and narrative fidelity, it must be relevant to the lives of the participants in the dialogue. Presumably, this measure of a story's coherence influenced individuals as they used unstructured time to explore elements of some people's stories, while other stories received less attention. As certain kernels received more attention due to their salience to participants, the power of identification became apparent. The other participants' identification with the faith kernel seemingly forced Will to conform to that same narrative. What then are the consequences of a dialogue setting where a singular kernel chains out in stories of *almost* all participants? What are the consequences if participants feel pressured to conform their stories to the narrative norms that emerge through salient kernel stories?

In this case, the consequences were not entirely negative. The takeaways from all the small group sessions, including Breakout Room 3, indicated that each participant found something valuable to draw from the session. Nevertheless, the impact of conforming narratives has troubling implications for other dialogue and deliberative settings. The goal of the virtual dialogue was to provide space for individuals to connect in a time of high anxiety prompted by the pandemic and racial distress. In short, the dialogue was therapeutic. However, the other cases

examined in this dissertation had civic purpose. For dialogues with epistemic goals or deliberations requiring decision-making, the conforming influence of kernels could limit participant understanding or possible solutions. This case revealed shortcomings in storytelling as a potential resource in dialogue and deliberation settings. While the kernels sparked empathy between participants, they also induced conformity, limiting the possibility for self-other differentiation. The focus on sameness can be problematic in deliberative settings where decisions must be made. As Christopher F. Karpowitz and Jane Mansbridge explained: "too much emphasis on the creation of shared values and solidarity can make it difficult to tease out underlying conflicts in the course of a deliberation."[101] Deliberation that aims to find good solutions to public problems requires controversy. This case and the LVN case revealed that, in practice, storytelling is not a mode of communication that encourages controversy. If a conversation's purpose is to facilitate empathy through building connections, storytelling can be a resource for facilitators. The expressed empathy that emerges from the storytelling approach, however, has limitations in conversations focused on problem-solving.

Conclusion

In the months following the virtual dialogue, the pandemic worsened. Just two days after the virtual dialogue, COVID-19 cases in the United States reached 2 million[102] and by the end of the year the virus had killed an estimated 345,323 Americans.[103] As the pandemic raged on, the mental health impacts of the pandemic became more severe. CDC data showed by June 2020 anxiety and depression, trauma, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation doubled expected rates.[104] Researchers tracked spiking rates of depression globally as people around the world coped with "millions of deaths, economic strife and unprecedented curbs on social interaction."[105] Arguably, the mental health consequences of Covid heightened the value of conversations following the

Essential Partners model for the virtual dialogue. Like feminist consciousness-raising groups who saw the power of providing women with the space to tell stories to combat isolation, the virtual dialogue met the needs of participants living in social isolation due to the pandemic.

The structure of the dialogue engendered storytelling through kernel chains, which acted as narrative resources for expressing empathy through language that acknowledged the other's experiences and emotions. The kernels promoted expressions of empathy and storytelling based on commonalities, which while not inherently a problem, resulted in conforming narratives. Interestingly, Kalcik observed that kernel stories lack uniformity,[106] but in this case they led to conformity. Participants gravitated toward kernels tied to commonalties in their experiences. Participants whose experiences did not directly connect with the salient kernel conformed to the group's storytelling practices and included the kernel in their stories and perspectives. The epistemic possibilities for dialogue could be limited if participants felt pressure to conform their story to the salient kernel. Additionally, in deliberative settings, the conforming influence of narrative stories could limit necessary controversy for coming to decisions that best serve the needs of others. The virtual dialogue served the needs of a community in a particular moment in time, revealing both the affordances and constraints of storytelling as a resource to serve a conversation's purpose and to facilitate empathy.

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Conclusion

"For empathy is the fuel of democracy. Let me say that again: Empathy—empathy is the fuel of democracy, a willingness to see each other — not as enemies, neighbors. Even when we disagree, to understand what the other is going through."

Remarks by President Joseph Biden at the 153rd National Memorial Day Observance, May 31, 2021[1]

Over one year into the COVID-19 global pandemic and nearly five months after right-wing extremists attacked the United States Capitol in an attempt to overturn the presidential election, President Joe Biden addressed military families at Arlington National Cemetery declaring, "democracy itself is in peril, here at home and around the world." Biden's assessment of the health of American democracy was hardly hyperbolic: political polarization in the United States is increasing at a faster rate than other democratic countries,[2] two out of three Americans believe the nation's democracy is under threat,[3] and by mid-May 2021, 14 states had enacted 22 new laws restricting voting access.[4] Biden's answer for this crisis? Empathy. This explicit call for empathy followed Biden's strategy—dubbed an "empathy offensive"—on the campaign trail.[5] His presidential campaign and the media characterized Biden as a salve for our fractured democracy: "Joe Biden is the empathy candidate, and he is running for president in a moment when America is in desperate need of empathy."[6] Biden's empathetic approach sharply contrasted Donald Trump's disregard for others' safety and human dignity.[7] With his successful bid for the presidency, columnists celebrated Biden as "an empathetic leader whose time has come."[8] The United States was ready for an Empathizer-in-Chief.

At the heart of Biden's call for empathy was a call for better practices of the public deliberation and dialogue that sustain our democracy. Deliberation and dialogue remain imperfect. I forwarded empathy as a practice for elevating deliberative and dialogic discourses

by helping participants more fully consider other perspectives and asked: *what deliberative and dialogic practices facilitate empathy?* To answer this question, I articulated a rhetorical definition of empathy that guided my analysis. I translated Amy Coplan's philosophical characterization of empathy to conceptualize empathy from a rhetorical perspective.[9] Individuals practice what I termed *expressed empathy* when they 1) express shared emotions with the other, 2) use language that acknowledges and imagines the other's experience, and 3) articulate a recognition of difference between self and other. Empathy is an ongoing process, rather than a static emotional state. Defining empathy as a process captured the moment-to-moment, or *emergent*, expressions of empathy between participants. I analyzed three distinct public conversations to answer this project's central question, responding to calls for research on actual examples of deliberation and dialogue to improve the communication within and participants' experiences during public conversations.[10]

In the first chapter, I analyzed audio tapes from four Citizens Interracial Committee (CIC) community dialogues on education. The sessions took place in 1968 and focused on ESL programming and Latinx student experiences in San Diego public schools. The CIC meetings followed a rigid format that began with official presentations from school representatives and then moved into an open forum for community member responses. The moderator focused on turn-taking and rule enforcement, requiring community members to suspend participation until the designated time for their responses. I identified two distinct types of expressed empathy based on CIC participants' communication, which I termed second- and third-person expressed empathy. A participant expresses second-person empathy when they empathize with the person they are speaking to (i.e., I empathize with you). Second-person expressed empathy encourages mutual vulnerability, a habit of political friendship that fosters trust between participants. A

participant expresses third-person empathy when they empathize with a real or imagined other outside the dialogue setting. This expressed empathy requires less vulnerability and makes reciprocal vulnerability impossible. Third-person empathy also requires less accountability than second-person expressed empathy since the person with whom a participant is empathizing is not a part of the dialogue and cannot challenge the imaginative work of the empathizer. The CIC participants used third-person expressed empathy as a persuasive tool for arguing for their position; they imagined the experiences of ESL and Latinx students in service of their argument, revealing the shortcomings of third-person expressions of empathy. Additionally, the CIC case demonstrated how the meeting structure constrained opportunities for second-person expressed empathy. The format prevented school representatives and community members from engaging in back-and-forth conversation, making it unlikely for participants to empathize with one other.

In the second chapter, I examined 75 transcripts of community conversations hosted by the Local Voices Network (LVN) and New York Public Library (NYPL) from February 2019 to March 2020. The LVN-NYPL facilitators primed participants to use personal stories to respond to the dialogue questions. Consequently, participants bonded over analogous experiences revealed through storytelling and expressed empathy based on those analogous experiences. They used language that acknowledged the other's experiences and expressed shared emotions but did not differentiate between themselves and the other. The LVN-NYPL conversations illustrated the value of expressed empathy based on similar experiences as participants established connections with their neighbors and prompted questions about the degree of difference necessary for expressed empathy to meaningfully enhance the epistemic goals of dialogue. The significance of the participants' expressions of empathy based on comparable

experiences ultimately will be shaped by whether LVN succeeds in getting community leaders to listen to these conversations and provide solutions to the concerns raised.

In the third chapter, I reviewed videos from a 90-minute virtual dialogue I hosted in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-three participants met in small groups led by facilitators who followed a script created by Essential Partners. Facilitators asked the participants to respond to two questions in a go-around fashion and then allowed participants unstructured time to ask one another questions. This format resulted in storytelling through kernel chains. The participants used the salient kernels as narrative resources for expressing empathy by acknowledging the others' experiences and expressing shared emotions. The kernels chained out through stories and expressed empathy based on similar experiences. However, participants conformed their narratives to include these kernels even if the kernel was not obviously salient to their experiences. This conforming influence of storytelling could undermine the ability of a dialogue to successfully capture participant perspectives or constrain the controversy needed to come to good decisions in deliberative settings.

Taken together these cases represented a range of rhetorical practices along the deliberation-dialogue spectrum. The CIC meetings aligned most closely with deliberative practices as they called for policy changes in San Diego. The LVN-NYPL conversations occupied a middle ground between deliberation and dialogue; the immediate goals of the conversation were epistemic (to build connections between neighbors and uncover community problems), while the longer-term goal is to bring these underheard perspectives to people with the power to address those problems and enact change. The virtual conversation used dialogue practices to meet the needs for human connection during a moment when many people felt alone and adrift because of the isolation caused by the pandemic. In what follows, I take the lessons

learned across these three cases to suggest conversation formats, facilitation strategies, and communication practices for cultivating empathy in dialogue and deliberation settings. I conclude by considering avenues for future research based on these approaches for facilitating empathy in dialogue and deliberation.

Practices for Facilitating Expressed Empathy

Public conversation organizations dedicate considerable time and resources to facilitator training to standardize their practices and to develop innovative engagement techniques.[11] Facilitator training cultivates the skills of facilitators and affects the experiences of participants.[12] If there is a "lack of quality control" in training facilitators, the resulting discourses between deliberating groups can be wide-ranging.[13] This project responds to calls for additional theorizing about facilitation practices by articulating four strategies public conversation organizers and facilitators can use to cultivate second-person expressed empathy.[14]

1) **Organizers and facilitators should structure time for talk *between* and *among* participants.**

In order for participants to be able to empathize with one another, they need time for back-and-forth conversation. Settings that require participants to listen passively and suspend their emotional responses limit the opportunity for second-person expressed empathy. Participants must have time to speak directly to one another in order for them to be able to empathize with the other participants in the conversation. In short, talk between participants enables the possibility for second-person expressed empathy. Dedicating time for dialogue between participants is especially important when the participants hold different levels of social or institutional power. When individuals with power listen to, acknowledge, and understand the experiences of marginalized people or groups, expressed empathy can be a tool for facilitating equitable and transformational public conversations. Facilitators aim for reciprocal

understanding, which opens the possibility for opinions to change.[15] The simplest step facilitators can take to encourage these transformational communication practices is to ask participants to speak directly with one another.

2) Facilitators should limit references to people or abstract groups outside the conversation setting.

This strategy facilitates second- rather than third-person expressed empathy because participants are discouraged from talking about people outside the conversation space. Consequently, this practice limits the use of expressed empathy as a purely persuasive tactic by holding participants accountable to the people engaged in the dialogue or deliberation. This strategy aligns with common communication agreements, such as "speak from your own experience." Facilitators can implement these rules through what Kara Dillard calls "process talk," the responsibility of facilitators to establish rules and to regulate the conversation.[16] By holding participants accountable to this suggested practice, facilitators encourage participants to speak from their own experiences and to the people with whom they are talking, creating opportunities for second-person expressed empathy to emerge. Effective facilitators are able to respond and adapt to the communication that unfolds in real time, making this strategy a reasonable responsibility of facilitators.[17] Additionally, this practice highlights the importance of having diverse perspectives and different people in the room. If facilitators and organizers find participants are consistently speaking about a group of people who are not a part of the conversation, it can serve as a cue that those people should be included in future dialogues or deliberations.

3) Facilitators should ask participants to contrast their experiences to encourage self-other differentiation.

Storytelling is a useful framework for facilitating empathy based on analogous experiences. It encourages participants to share personal details that enable expressed empathy to emerge. As Iris Marion Young argued: "narrative can server to explain to outsiders what practices, places, or symbols mean to the people who hold them."[18] Peter Goldie theorized that empathizing requires two different types of information: characterization and narrative. Characterization includes psychological, physical, and background information on an individual. Narrative is a person's story. Goldie explained: "Both characterization and narrative are independently necessary for empathy: without the former, there is no possibility of centrally imagining *another*; and without the latter, there is no narrative to experience—."[19] Goldie's observation explains the type of information that facilitators should encourage participants to share during a conversation. When individuals share specific experiences and provide details about their personal backgrounds, they discover commonalities and express empathy based on those analogous experiences. Consistently, participants in the conversations analyzed in this project used language that expressed shared emotions and acknowledged the experiences of others to empathize over their comparable personal stories. Self-other differentiation, however, was noticeably absent from these expressions.

Still, storytelling has the potential to be a resource for empathizing across differences. As Young pointed out, stories reveal the uniqueness of a person's social position and experience and listening to an individual's story can make the listener aware that the speaker's life experiences are distinct from their own.[20] Therefore, facilitators should probe participants to think about the differences between their stories when participants express empathy based on analogous experiences. Facilitators are traditionally responsibly for rearticulating competing values expressed by participants, for helping participants see their differences as opportunities, and for

probing for both points of divergence and convergence to foster both conflict and cooperation.[21] Asking individuals to differentiate between themselves and the other is an appropriate facilitator strategy to make storytelling a more valuable resource for facilitating expressed empathy. As Shari Stone-Mediatore argued, stories are most useful when they encourage "self-examination, responsible participation in public life, and accountability to others."[22] Self-other differentiation is an important tenet of expressed empathy because it acknowledges that empathetic imagining is always incomplete and avoids the potential pitfall of empathy to erase differences.

4) Facilitators should consider a conversation's specific context, setting, and goals to determine which strategies for facilitating empathy best serve its purpose.

The three cases revealed facilitators' different responsibilities based on the conversation's purpose and structure. As Dillard explained, facilitators must provide "discursive scaffolds" that move the conversation from "everyday political talk" to meaningful conversations that achieve the goals of a particular dialogue or deliberation.[23] Therefore, facilitators and organizers should determine what the desired outcomes of the conversation are and select practices that facilitate empathy to meet those needs. For example, facilitators may decide that storytelling works best as a dialogic practice to facilitate expressed empathy between participants before formal deliberation. Alternatively, facilitators may determine that storytelling is a useful strategy for facilitating empathy during decision-making processes. For example, Laura Black suggested that "when groups are struggling with adversarially framed relationships, facilitators can solicit stories and ask questions to help interrogate how group members view themselves, the issue, each others' perspectives, and the possibility for common ground."[24] When used this way, storytelling captures unique experiences that collectively provide new understanding that cannot be gleaned from a single perspective and encourages consideration of the possible consequences of decisions on different populations.[25] This application reveals one shortcoming of this project.

None of the three cases used a highly-structured deliberative model, like the National Issues Forum[26] or Deliberative Polling,[27] leaving unanswered questions about which strategies for facilitating expressed empathy might be most appropriate for traditional deliberative settings.

Moving Forward with Practices for Facilitating Expressed Empathy

In closing, I consider avenues for future research based on my analysis of the three cases. First, the examples of expressed empathy in the cases never included all three tenets, with the third criteria of self-other differentiation being consistently absent. Therefore, more research is needed to see if expressions of empathy can include all three characteristics when organizers actively plan public conversations with the goal of facilitating expressed empathy. The practices I previously articulated present possible strategies and resources for organizers and facilitators to cultivate expressed empathy, but as Sandford and Quick reflected, "the methods available to facilitators…are better conceptualized as *potential resources* than as formulas or failsafe approaches with predictable consequences."[28] Future research could analyze public conversations that incorporate the suggestions I articulated to determine if they successfully cultivate expressed empathy that articulates shared emotions, acknowledges the other's experience, *and* differentiates between self and other. Finally, future projects could incorporate participant perspectives. Surveys and interviews could determine when participants felt others empathized with them and if the criteria for identifying expressed empathy match when people self-report experiencing empathy.[29] Surveys and interviews could also investigate what processes, moments, and practices inspired empathy and what barriers inhibited empathy.

My hope is that this project provides a path forward that recognizes the possibilities of public conversations that embrace practices of empathy. As one participant during the virtual dialogue reflected, "Every human being has a story and hearing other peoples' stories is how we

benefit and grow."[30] If we are to meet the challenges of our times, we must be willing to hear our neighbors' stories, sincerely consider the perspectives of others, and tackle public problems together. In the words of Gloria Steinem, empathy is "the most radical tool we have."[31] Empathy, even if imperfect, deserves a place in our public conversations. The challenges of the 21st century have revealed deep divisions in our communities and democracy, yet the joys of community and the rewards of accountability to the common good make it worth giving empathy a try.

Conclusion Notes

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[23] Dillard, "Envisioning the Role of Facilitation in Public Deliberation," 218.

[24] Black, "Framing Democracy and Conflict Through Storytelling in Deliberative Groups," 26.

[25] Young, "Communication and the Other," 132.

[26] The National Issues Forums "is a nonpartisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums for the consideration of public policy issues." NIF trains neutral moderators to lead participants through discussions on key issues. Participants review carefully curated discussion guides, consider three or four possible solutions to an identified public problem, and deliberate over the consequences of each approach.

See "About NIF Forums," NIF, June 25, 2014. https://www.nifi.org/en/about-nif-forums.

[27] Deliberative Polling—a trademark of James Fishkin—combines public opinion research with formal deliberation. First, the organizations polls a representative sample of the community. Then they provide the community members with more information on the selected topic and

bring them together to deliberate over the selected issues with one another and experts on the topic. The participants are then polled again using the original questions to demonstrate how public opinion can changed when people are given the opportunity to learn more about and deliberate over public problems.

See "What Is Deliberative Polling®?" CDD, Accessed November 29, 2021. https://cdd.stanford.edu/what-is-deliberative-polling/.

[28] Sandfort and Quick, "Deliberative Technology," 22.

[29] In the Introduction, I contended as a rhetorical critic I am concerned with expressions, not intent. However, rhetorical critics, do address circulation and reception, opening a path for future research that considers how participant perceptions of and experiences with empathy line up with my analysis of its emergence.

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