Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

Minerva
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-023-09517-9

1 # An Uneasy Peace: How STEM Progressive, 2 Traditionalist, and Bridging Faculty Understand 3 Campus Conflicts over Diversity, Anti-racism, and Free 4 Expression

5 **Steven Brint**[1] · **Megan Webb**[1] · **Benjamin Fields**[1]

6 Accepted: 19 October 2023
7 © Springer Nature B.V. 2024

8 **Abstract** In recent years an uneasy peace has descended in U.S. academe between 9 those who feel research universities have done too little to advance the representation 10 of minority groups and women and those who feel that the administrative policies 11 developed to improve representation can and sometimes do come into conflict with 12 core intellectual commitments of universities. Using quantitative and qualitative 13 evidence from interviews with 47 natural sciences, engineering, and mathematics 14 faculty members at a U.S. research university, the paper examines the background 15 characteristics of three sets of protagonists - academic progressives, academic tra- 16 ditionalists, and those whose views bridge the divide - and the way respondents 17 discussed and justified their viewpoints. The paper draws on the theory of strategic 18 action fields to illuminate the structure and dynamics of the conflict and suggests 19 modifications to the theory that would improve its explanatory power for this case.

20 **Keywords** STEM faculty · Diversity policies · Academic freedom · Anti-racism

REVISED PROOF

21 ## Introduction

22 In recent years an uneasy peace has descended in U.S. academe between those 23 who feel research universities have done too little to advance the representation 24 of minority groups (Barber et al. 2020; Harper and Simmons 2019) and women

A1

A2 ✉ Benjamin Fields

A3 Steven Brint
A4 brint@ucr.edu

A5 [1] Department of Sociology, 1108 Watkins Hall, University of California, Riverside, 900
A6 University Avenue, Riverside, CA, USA

and those who feel that the administrative policies designed to improve representation can and sometimes do come into conflict with the foundational intellectual commitments of universities (Pinker 2021; Whittington 2018; Wooldridge 2021). This uneasy peace has been marked by many micro-level skirmishes involving activist assertions of continuing inequities and reactive opposition in support of traditional academic and intellectual values, with many faculty members remaining quiet or attempting to bridge the divide. The conditions on campus have also generated what appear to be an increasing number of formal proceedings against those accused of racial or gender bias (see, e.g., German and Stevens 2021). They have also been used to legitimate a wave of restrictive legislation in politically conservative U.S. states (Young and Friedman 2023).

The arguments of proponents and critics of the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and anti-racism policies of universities have become familiar in the United States through well-publicized policy debates (see, e.g., Moreno et al. 2012; Soucek 2022), open letters (Barber et al. 2020; Harper's Magazine 2020; Princeton University Faculty Signatories 2020), near-daily opinion pieces (see, e.g., Butler 2022; McWhorter 2020; Will 2022) and press reports (see, e.g., Powell 2021a, 2021b). These arguments have become familiar also in many European countries (European Parliament 2023). However, we do not know as much about who the protagonists and antagonists are on campus, how they make sense of and justify their positions, or about whether social science theories can help to illuminate the structure and dynamics of conflict.

In this paper, we provide evidence and analysis to begin to fill these research gaps. Our conclusions are based on extensive interviews with 47 academic scientists, engineers, and mathematicians (also known as STEM faculty) concerning campus DEI policies, anti-racism, freedom of expression and inquiry, and meritocratic selection. These are the topics at the heart of the recent campus conflicts in the United States (Honeycutt et al. 2023) and abroad (European Parliament 2023).

Our research questions are as follows:

1) Who are the main sets of actors in the campus controversies we analyze?
2) What socio-demographic and identity characteristics distinguish those in each of the main set of actors?
3) How do those in each group make sense of and justify their positions?
4) To what extent can theory aid in the analysis of these conflicts?

We focus on STEM faculty for two reasons. First, the views of faculty members in the humanities and social sciences have been analyzed in greater depth and at a more granular level than those of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians (see, e.g., German 2020; Park and Denson 2009). Second, STEM faculty are of particular interest because they stand at the top of the modern academic status hierarchy. They have access to substantially more funding than other academics, publish much more research than those in other disciplines, are recognized by the most prestigious honors, and are regarded as doing work that on average requires the highest level of intellectual training and rigor (Brint 2018). Their work also

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

68 has practical applications that are comparatively rare among practitioners in other
69 disciplines (Cole 2009). Their views consequently have the potential to influence
70 the values of academic institutions disproportionately. Issues of representation
71 loom large in STEM fields, both in the United States (NCSES 2023) and globally
72 (Global Research Council 2021) and the scientific community has been divided
73 by the same conflicts as other academic communities when issues of representa-
74 tion come into conflict with other academic values (see, e.g., Abbot et al. 2023).
75 If scientists and engineers have largely adopted the views of DEI and anti-racism
76 advocates, the future of research universities is likely to be significantly different
77 than it was during the heyday of the "academic revolution" (Jencks and Riesman
78 1968) when hiring focused more exclusively on those with the most prestigious
79 academic pedigrees and professional accomplishments.

80 The study was conducted in a liberal state. Where governors and legislatures in
81 liberal states have put weight on the scale in favor of policies to support the aspira-
82 tions of minorities and women, politicians in several conservative U.S. states have
83 passed legislation with the opposite intent. Several states have now banned DEI
84 offices and others are considering to do so. One state has also banned the teaching
85 of theories concerning systemic racism and sexism and others are considering to do
86 so (PEN America 2023). Whether these restrictions will prove enduring will depend
87 on how U.S. courts rule on challenges to them. It is clear that future U.S. studies
88 will need to pay attention to developments in these conservative states, as well as in
89 liberal states.

90 We begin with an overview of the policies, movements, and traditions that under-
91 lie the conflicts with which we are concerned. We then introduce the theoretical
92 ideas and frameworks on which we draw for analysis. We then discuss our data and
93 methods followed by our results. Our results are organized to address the research
94 questions above in sequential order. We conclude with a discussion of our principal
95 findings.

96 DEI Policies, Anti-Racism, and Traditional Academic Values

97 Many university administrators and faculty members consider DEI efforts to be a
98 necessary response to persistent inequalities in representation by race-ethnicity and
99 gender, as well as a means to bring new talent and a broader range of scholarly inter-
100 ests into their institutions (Brint and Frey 2023). According to government statistics,
101 in 2020 only about 12 percent of full-time native-born faculty in the United States
102 were black, Hispanic, Native American, or of mixed-race parentage; the popula-
103 tion percentage of Americans old enough to teach in colleges and universities was
104 approximately twice as high (NCSES 2020). The rapidly diversifying population of
105 the United States heightens concern about these discrepancies; fully half of children
106 under the age of 18 in 2020 were members of a minority group or were of mixed-
107 race parentage (ChildStats.gov 2021).

108 The situation for women has, by contrast, improved much faster but neverthe-
109 less gaps remain in women's representation among students and faculty in the
110 STEM disciplines (AAUW 2021). In science, the increased participation of women

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

111 and minorities has been associated also with the uncovering of biases in previous
112 research (see, e.g., Furl et al. 2002; Obermeyer et al. 2019; Woodward 2019).
113 Although U.S. university documents often highlight the value of many different
114 forms of diversity - including religious, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity -
115 in practice diversity policies now typically focus on racial-ethnic minorities, women,
116 and, to a lesser degree, LGBTQ+ students and faculty. This was also true of the
117 campus we studied.
118 Administrative efforts to promote more equitable representation include the adop-
119 tion of diversity as an element in university mission statements; requirements that
120 candidates for appointment and promotion submit statements about their contribu-
121 tions to diversity; administrative guidance on micro-aggressions and trigger warn-
122 ings; the funding of safe spaces for those who feel marginalized on campus; and
123 trainings on the implicit biases that can lead to inequities in the allocation of oppor-
124 tunities. These policies have been supported by campus DEI offices, which have
125 become widely institutionalized over the last two decades (Kwak et al. 2018) and by
126 the sizeable number of students and faculty who see themselves as diversity advo-
127 cates (Park and Denson 2009).
128 The anti-racism movement has been influential over the last decade as a quasi-
129 independent and determined force for social change on campus. It has highlighted
130 examples of systemic racism and has introduced new terms into campus discourse,
131 including “White supremacy,” “White privilege,” and “White fragility.” It has also
132 pioneered new practices for encouraging social change. These include advocacy
133 for “de-centering” Western assumptions, methods, and epistemologies from course
134 materials; the use of campus websites to publicize departmental support for progres-
135 sive causes; listening sessions to air the concerns of those who perceive themselves
136 to be targets of bias; grading concessions for those who feel the obligation to partici-
137 pate in protests; the renaming of buildings associated with those who have espoused
138 racist or sexist views; and the partial or complete removal of police from campus
139 (see, e.g., Bartlett 2021).
140 DEI policies and the ideas of the anti-racism movement have raised concerns
141 and, in some cases, faced opposition when they have been perceived to come into
142 conflict with foundational principles of academic professionalism. Opposition has
143 arisen primarily in defense of three values: academic freedom, rationalist inquiry,
144 and meritocratic selection. Academic freedom promises professors unfettered free-
145 dom of inquiry and expression within the spheres of their professional competence
146 as a necessary prerequisite to the pursuit of truth (AAUP 1940). Where DEI policies
147 seek to constrain speech and action in ways that are beneficial to marginalized popu-
148 lations, academic freedom encourages professors to speak freely within the sphere
149 of their professional competence. The canons of rationalist inquiry require scien-
150 tists and scholars to base their truth-claims on evidence systematically collected and
151 analyzed and open to inspection and criticism by members of the relevant specialist
152 community (Pinker 2021; Searle 1994). Where DEI policies and anti-racist activism
153 seek to broaden teaching and curriculum to be more responsive to the contributions
154 of racial-ethnic minorities, women, and those from non-Western cultures, the canons
155 of rationalist inquiry require professors to validate truth-claims in ways that diver-
156 sity advocates sometimes find unnecessary, using methods they sometimes find to

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

157 reflect Western or white male biases. Meritocratic selection refers to hiring and pro-
158 motion practices based on universalistic criteria of excellence grounded in scholarly
159 qualifications and disciplinary publication, teaching, and service norms (Abbot et al.
160 2023; Wooldridge 2021). Where DEI policies place an emphasis on representation
161 in university admissions and hiring, the principles of meritocratic selection place
162 an emphasis on evidence of scholarly and professional accomplishment that may be
163 less available to members of socially disadvantaged groups (see, e.g., Espenshade
164 and Radford Walton 2009). Bases for conflict are evident in these contending value
165 strains.

166 Theoretical Framework

167 We have drawn on theory for two distinct purposes. The more limited purpose is
168 to provide aid in the interpretation of the qualitative data we have collected on the
169 issue positions and sentiments of STEM faculty. The other and broader purpose is
170 to illuminate the structures of opposition and the dynamics of conflict in our case.
171 These two purposes require different theoretical frameworks.

172 *Cultural Scripts*

173 For the purpose of aiding in the interpretation of our qualitative data, we use the
174 concept of "cultural scripts." As we will use the term, "cultural scripts" refers to
175 cognitive schemas that are prominent within social groups. Cultural scripts should
176 not be understood as rigid formulae but rather as flexible, context-dependent frames
177 for understanding situations and for explaining and justifying action based on selec-
178 tion from a set of publicly available ideas and orientations (Goddard and Wierzbicka
179 2004). They can be adopted from sources external to an organization, such as from
180 ideas presented in media discourse or by advocacy organizations, or from sources
181 internal to an organization, such as those drawn from among the commonly held
182 beliefs circulating among campus social circles. In theory, cultural scripts that are
183 widely disseminated in an environment are available for selection by any actor in
184 that environment, but among the available scripts some will resonate to a greater
185 degree with the interests and identities of different sets of actors. In our view, actors'
186 interests and identities do not determine their selection from among available cul-
187 tural scripts; rather the connections are variable and based on elective affinities.
188 Interpretation of personal experiences are also ways of understanding and justify-
189 ing positions but are based on biographical events. Interpretations of biographical
190 events are, however, frequently influenced by cultural scripts in so far as they follow
191 distinctive culturally approved patterns of interpretation. An example is provided by
192 the professor in our sample who attributed disappointments in her early career to
193 gender discrimination, an interpretation that has become more widespread in Amer-
194 ican culture over time and one that would contrast, for example, with alternative
195 interpretations based on problems with a research agenda or with productivity.

REVISED PROOF

196 *Strategic Action Fields*

197 For purposes of illuminating the structures of opposition and the dynamics of
198 conflict in our case, we draw on the theory of strategic action fields (SAFs), also
199 known as the theory of fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2012).[1] The theory of fields
200 is a leading theory of intra-organizational conflict. It has been applied in the analy-
201 sis of numerous cases, including digital transformations in Swiss businesses (Peter
202 et al. 2020), the implementation of community wind energy in Denmark (Mey and
203 Diesendorf 2018), reputational repair following scandals (Bozic et al. 2019), the
204 identification of highly creative groups in science, art, and other endeavors (Parker
205 and Corte 2017) and as a general framework for understanding policy implementa-
206 tion processes (Moulton and Sandfor 2016). We invoke the theory because we have
207 found it valuable for helping us to make sense of our case materials and to provide
208 leverage for understanding the structure and dynamics of the conflict and its possible
209 outcomes.
210 Strategic action fields are defined by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) as funda-
211 mental units of collective action in society. They are constructed meso-level social
212 organizations in which actors are attuned to and interact with one another on the
213 basis of shared understandings about the purpose of the field, relationships to oth-
214 ers in the field, and the rules governing legitimate action. The main sets of actors in
215 SAFs are incumbents (those who occupy dominant positions within the field) and
216 challengers (those who often accede to incumbents but also engage in contestation
217 to improve their positions in the field). Incumbents and challengers are motivated by
218 identities and interests. Internal governing units (IGUs) create, regulate, and legiti-
219 mate existing settlements within SAFs. Jockeying for power and influence between
220 incumbents and challengers is a normal feature of organizational life but rarely dis-
221 ruptive in large part because of the stabilizing influence of IGUs. Very often state
222 actors play the role of IGU but non-state authorities within the field may also do so.
223 SAFs vary in size and function from small scale (for example, a single academic
224 department) to large scale (for example, the entire U.S. post-secondary education
225 system). Smaller SAFs are embedded in or have other types of relations with larger
226 SAFs. For example, a single campus SAF may be embedded in or be influenced by
227 a coordinating body for a state's higher education institutions, by legislative com-
228 mittees responsible for public higher education, by associations of similarly situated
229 universities, and by other larger SAFs. These larger SAFs constitute important fea-
230 tures of the broader environment facing smaller SAFs and often influence the organ-
231 ization and purposes of smaller SAFs.
232 Under normal conditions, the reproduction of fields (including its power struc-
233 ture and dominant cultural system) is typical, but under specific circumstances fields
234 can enter periods of uncertainty and contestation. These episodes of contention

REVISED PROOF

1FL01 [1] Issue of inequality clearly bear on this case, and while we recognize the value of theories concerning
1FL02 the sources and consequences of inequality in education (see, e.g., Bourdieu and Passeron 1977 [1970];
1FL03 Bronfenbrenner 1979), our research more directly concerns the sources of intra-organizational conflict in
1FL04 U.S. higher education.

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

235 may be precipitated either by disruptions in nearby SAFs or by exogenous shocks,
236 or by both. Where dependencies are strong, disruptions in nearby and more power-
237 ful SAFs will tend to destabilize less powerful SAFs. Exogenous shocks, such as a
238 severe economic recession or a new national political alignment, also disrupt rela-
239 tions within an SAF. For Fligstein and McAdam, changes in power relations within
240 SAFs (and accompanying changes in the dominant cultural system) are usually pre-
241 cipitated by exogenous shocks. These shocks create vulnerabilities for IGUs and
242 incumbents and new opportunities for challengers.
243 Fligstein and McAdam emphasize that outcomes from these episodes of conten-
244 tion are partly explained by the social skills of the leaders of the IGUs and of the
245 incumbent and challenging groups. They are also partly explained by the incentives
246 in the environment available to the contending groups. By social skill, they mean
247 the ability of leading actors to create strong ties and to mobilize action among those
248 sympathetic to their cause. The interests of emerging conflict groups are constituted
249 culturally in collective action frames. These can be understood as distinctive concep-
250 tions of the field reflecting the "self-serving" interests of incumbents and the "oppo-
251 sitional" interests of challengers.[2] By incentives in the environment, they mean the
252 economic, social, and political resources that are available to support the positions
253 of incumbents and challengers. Depending on the social skill of leading actors and
254 the extent to which they access and effectively employ the available incentives in
255 their environment, these disruptions can lead to re-stabilization of the dominant
256 structure, compromises between the contending parties, or entirely new settlements
257 in which challengers emerge as the new incumbents.
258 Figure 1 provides a representation of Fligstein and McAdam's theory of intra-
259 organizational conflict.
260 The theory of strategic action fields has clear applications to our case. Ours can
261 be interpreted as an instance of an SAF (the university) experiencing a set of dis-
262 ruptions in which the positions of nominal incumbents (academic traditionalists)
263 and challengers (academic progressives) have become uncertain. The university is
264 embedded in and has relations with other larger SAFs in its environment, including
265 notably the system-wide administration and the state government. The system-wide
266 administration, including the system-wide faculty senate, has been a strong advocate
267 for advancing student and faculty diversity since the turn of the 21st century (Brint
268 and Frey 2023). Many state legislators as well as the current governor have objec-
269 tives with respect to representation similar to those of the system-wide university
270 administration (Ibid.).[3]
271 The distinctive socio-demographic characteristics of incumbents and challeng-
272 ers can be known. Identities are the motivating features associated with distinc-
273 tive socio-demographic characteristics and interests can often be inferred from

REVISED PROOF

2FL01 [2] We discuss the differences between cultural scripts and the framing processes and collective action
2FL02 frames emphasized by Fligstein and McAdam at greater length below and argue that the concepts are
2FL03 most relevant at different stages in conflict group formation.

3FL01 [3] The governorship and both houses of state legislature in the state have been controlled by Democrats,
3FL02 the left-of-center U.S. party, since 2011. The Democrats have held veto-proof supermajorities since
3FL03 2018.

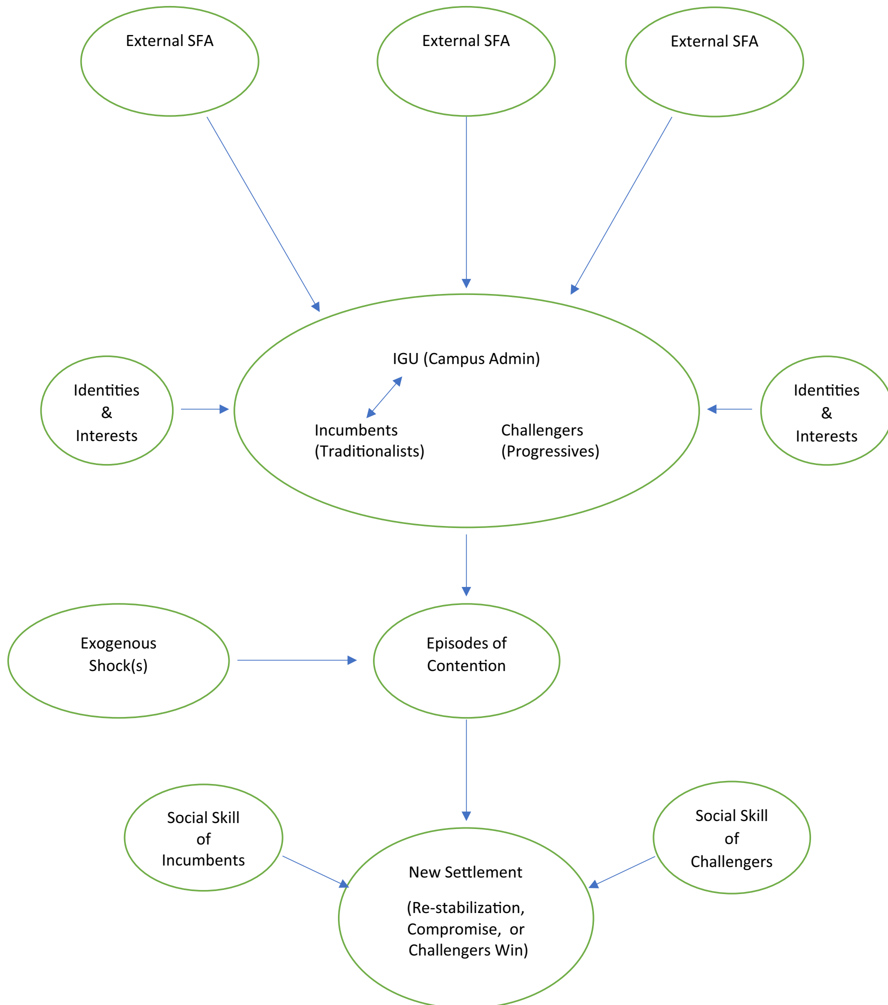

Fig. 1 Fligstein-McAdam Model of Intra-Organizational Conflict

RE

274 the statements of actors. The primary IGU in this case is the campus administra-
275 tion. Its leaders administer policy and attempt to manage conflicts on campus on
276 a case-by-case basis. According to the theory, the IGU will support incumbents
277 unless or until external disruptions lead a new settlement favoring challengers or
278 involving a new compromise between the interests of the contending groups. It
279 is clear that the disruptions caused by demographic change and campus protests
280 over racial and gender inequities have influenced the policies and outlooks of the
281 IGUs and have provided opportunities for challengers (Brint and Frey 2023). The
282 eventual outcome of the disruptions is still unknown but, as we will show, the
283 position of progressives appears to be improving and that of traditionalists declin-
284 ing. While we find the theory of fields to be an important aid in analysis, we

also find features of the theory to require elaborations or modifications in order to more accurately fit our case. We discuss these suggested elaborations and modifications in a later section of the paper.

Data and Methods

Study Site

This study is based on interviews with tenured and tenure-track faculty members in STEM disciplines at a U.S. public research university. The university is known for attracting a very diverse group of undergraduate students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend a university. The university administration is highly committed to policies to enhance DEI. As a public research university, the faculty face incentives also to admit graduate students and hire faculty who better reflect the population groups that make up the state. In recent years, these incentives have been reinforced by policy initiatives of the governing board and officials in the state government (Brint and Frey 2023). At the same time, as a top 100 American research university, the faculty has incentives to compete successfully for grant funding, to produce important research findings for publication, and to measure themselves on professional achievement criteria such as citation counts and prestigious awards. These incentives are reinforced by a merit system that rewards productivity and external recognition of professional accomplishments.

The research site offered a number of attractive features for the study. To the extent that we find ambivalence about or opposition to DEI policies and the language and practices of the anti-racism movement among scientists and engineers at this very progressive-minded university, we can plausibly infer that ambivalence and opposition are likely to be stronger at universities where the incentives for support are weaker. On the other hand, to the extent we find substantial support for both DEI policies and the anti-racism movement, the findings would suggest a pattern that may unfold over time at less overtly progressive public universities as the diversity of the college-age population increases.

Sample

We obtained lists of all tenured and tenure-track faculty in three academic units: the science college (which includes the departments of mathematics and statistics as well as the physical and life sciences) and the schools of engineering and medicine. In the medical school, we focused exclusively on the biomedical science faculty rather than clinical faculty. We sent out invitations to 143 randomly chosen faculty members, or one out of three professors on the lists we received. Five faculty members responded that they had left the university or retired, reducing the valid sample to 138. Of these 138, 47 agreed to be interviewed, a response

REVISED PROOF

rate of 34 percent. Thirty-seven faculty members declined our invitation, and the remaining 57 did not respond either to the original invitation or to two follow-ups. To check on non-response bias, we asked those who declined for the primary reason(s) why they did not wish to participate. All but three of those who declined our invitation responded to this question; 80 percent said they declined because they were too busy to sit for an interview. A few of those who declined indicated that they were uncomfortable talking about controversial topics about which their colleagues had expressed strong views.

The life sciences (including biomedical) faculty were overrepresented by a statistically significant margin among those who agreed to be interviewed, and physical sciences, engineering, and mathematics faculty were under-represented. Faculty members of Asian descent (including those born in both East and South Asia) were under-represented at a nearly statistically significant level. Given the greater support for progressive politics among biological sciences and White faculty (see below), these distributions suggest that the divisions in the STEM faculty over DEI policies and anti-racism may be somewhat more equal than we found in this sample of participants.

Many surveys of faculty social and political attitudes exist. (See Gross 2013 for an overview of U.S. studies.) The comparative advantage of this mixed-methods study lies in the depth of analysis possible through lengthy, well-focused interviews. According to Yin (2003), the goal of qualitative case studies is to allow researchers to observe and understand complex phenomena. Yin observed that qualitative case studies are particularly useful for understanding why participants believe and act as they do. Using Saldaña's (2014) framework for coding, we were attentive to "values coding," or the attitudes, values, and beliefs participants conveyed in their responses. We were attentive also to "versus coding" or the oppositions these distinctive values conveyed. Our work is a constructivist study, as defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994), in so far as we did not impose a set of pre-existing expectations or hypotheses on participants. At the same time, we aimed to develop meaningful conceptualizations and potentially generalizable hypotheses based on participants' responses, placing the study also in the positivistic category, in Guba and Lincoln's terms. The material we collected is rich in detail and highly suggestive of potentially more general patterns. The sparsity of the existing studies of these important debates, the richness of the qualitative responses, and the potentially generalizable hypotheses and modifications of theory generated by the study fully justify the research and render the results of value, despite the relatively small number of interviewees.[4]

REVISED PROOF

[4] For an overview of qualitative methods and case study applications in education, see Merriam (1994).

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

360 *Interview Protocol, Coding, and Data Analysis Strategy*

361 The interviews took place in academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22.[5] Each of the
362 three members of the research team conducted interviews based on random assign-
363 ment. Interviews averaged one hour and 15 minutes, with a range from 40 minutes
364 to 2.5 hours.

365 The interview protocol was designed to probe participants' views of the issues
366 that are at the heart of current campus controversies. We included a number of
367 questions relevant to each of the three major topics: DEI policies, anti-racism, and
368 free expression. Participants' responses to questions about DEI policies also elic-
369 ited responses relevant to their thinking about the validity of meritocratic selection
370 processes. The interview questions were developed and pilot tested by the research
371 team. In developing questions our primary objective was to identify members of the
372 main sets of actors on campus in relation to the current campus controversies and
373 to use the interview format to collect rich understandings of the sources of partici-
374 pants' views on the topics that are at the heart of these controversies – i.e., DEI poli-
375 cies, anti-racism, freedom of expression, and meritocratic selection processes.

376 We analyzed STEM faculty views of DEI policies, anti-racism, and free expres-
377 sion together because current tensions and conflicts involve actors who have taken a
378 distinctive set of positions on these subjects. We analyzed several items in each of
379 these three areas to cover the range of issues that have been prominent flash points
380 on the campus we studied. By using multiple questions to investigate participants'
381 thinking in each domain, we anticipated that we would be able to distinguish group
382 identities in a more robust way than would have been possible using just one or two
383 questions. The full text of questions in each of the three main attitude domains are
384 provided in Appendix Table 3.

385 We draw on four of the sections of the interview protocol in this paper.[6] In part
386 one, we asked respondents about their views concerning a wide range of DEI pol-
387 icies that some U.S. universities have adopted. The questions in this section also
388 addressed respondents' views about free expression as these views relate to cam-
389 pus controversies. The questions concerned the role of race and gender in graduate
390 admissions and faculty hiring; diversity as a mission of the university; the use of
391 diversity statements in hiring and promotion; curricula transformations to incorpo-
392 rate under-represented contributors and topics of interest to communities of color;
393 speech codes and other language related policies such as the required use of stu-
394 dent-chosen pronouns; implicit bias training and response teams; the development
395 of campus "safe spaces" for groups whose members feel marginalized; and speaker
396 dis-invitations and disruptions. In a second part, we asked participants about fea-
397 tures of the language and practices of the anti-racism movement on campus. This

REVISED PROOF

5FL01 [5] The interviews took place after the protests over police killings of unarmed Black people that occurred
5FL02 in many U.S. cities during the summer of 2020. Although these episodes were not mentioned by partici-
5FL03 pants in our interviews, they may have influenced the thinking of some.

6FL01 [6] In the final section we asked participants about the extent to which scientific and DEI emphases played
6FL02 a role in their teaching and research. In this paper, we do not draw on this section. The interview ques-
6FL03 tions were pilot tested and approved by the campus Institutional Review Board.

section included questions about systemic racism in American society and on campus; the use of terms such as White supremacy, White privilege, and White fragility; the use of listening sessions to address student concerns as opposed to dialogues; allowances in grading for student protesters; the renaming of buildings in cases where the named individual has been credibly accused of racist or sexist views; and whether police should be removed from campus. In a third part, we asked participants about their comfort levels in discussing topics related to DEI, and whether their comfort levels had changed over time. We use this section as an indirect indicator of how confident the main set of actors felt about their standing on campus. In a final section of the protocol, we collected demographic and work-related data about the participants and self-assessments of their political ideologies. We use this information to distinguish the socio-demographic and identity characteristics of members of the main sets of actors.

As we reviewed the interview transcripts, we found that participants' answers could be coded into one of three categories for purposes of statistical analysis: (1) support, (2) opposition, or (3) ambivalent/refraining to take a position. We subsequently went through the answers of each participant to code them using this scheme. The items were coded consistently so that participant mean scores close to one indicated consistently more liberal responses, while participant mean scores close to three indicated consistently more skeptical responses to the items. We use these codes to address our first research question on the identification of the main sets of actors and our second research question on the socio-demographic and identity characteristics of the main sets of actors in our analysis.

Our results also draw extensively on the qualitative data. Specifically, the ways that participants discussed their views were retained to address our third research question on the sources of actors' positions and beliefs. This analysis draws on more than 1,000 pages of transcribed interviews. From the transcriptions, the research team excerpted and categorized 50 single-spaced pages of quotes under 100 headings. We developed the headings through an iterative process of searching for common bases of belief and common sentiments of affiliation and opposition, a process involving both values and versus coding to use Saldaña's (2014) terms. These quotes illuminated important contrasts and themes, and the ways respondents discussed the sources of their viewpoints. All three members of the research team were involved in the compilation, categorization, and analysis of quotes.

REVISED PROOF

Results

We address our research questions sequentially. First, we identify the primary sets of actors that emerged from the analysis of participants' responses and we describe the socio-demographic and identity characteristics that distinguished these sets of actors from one another. Second, we analyze the cultural scripts and interpretations of personal experience used by actors in each of the categories to make sense of the contemporary tensions in universities over DEI policies, anti-racism, and freedom of expression. In this section, we show how some responses were influenced by individuals' distinguishing socio-demographic and identity characteristics. One of

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

441 the most important advantages of qualitative work is its capacity to engage deeply
442 with participants' understandings of their situations (Merriam 1994; Yin 2003).
443 This depth of engagement is an important contribution of the paper and we therefore
444 devote considerable attention to findings in this section. Finally, we show how the
445 theory of strategic action fields can be used to aid in the analysis of this case, noting
446 the features of the theory that require elaboration or modification to fit our case.

447 *Identifying the Principal Sets of Actors and their Identity-Related Characteristics*

448 We begin by addressing our first research question on the identification of sets of
449 actors involved in the recent campus controversies. Three sets of actors emerged
450 from our analysis. We label these groups "academic progressives," (shortened for
451 purposes of exposition to "progressives"), "academic traditionalists," (shortened to
452 "traditionalists")[7] and "bridging faculty."
453 We identified the first two of these sets of actors by grouping those who had con-
454 sistently high or consistently low scores on a subset of 17 interview questions about
455 which nearly all participants had baseline knowledge.[8] STEM progressives were
456 highly supportive of diversity policies, convinced of the existence of systemic rac-
457 ism in American society, supportive of many of the ideas and practices of anti-racist
458 activists, and often supportive of policies that restrict expression to avoid offending
459 under-represented groups on campus. STEM traditionalists, by contrast, tended to be
460 skeptical of or opposed to DEI policies, opposed to anti-racist ideas and practices,
461 and highly supportive of policies protecting free expression. Some were skeptical
462 that systemic racism existed in most sectors of American life and most denied that
463 systemic racism existed on the campus.
464 We looked for breaks in the distribution of scores to identify STEM progressives
465 and traditionalists. In the borderline cases, we reviewed the transcripts to determine
466 whether the individuals belonged in one of the two categories at the ends or in the
467 middle of the distribution. Through these procedures, we identified 12 STEM pro-
468 gressives, with an average score of 1.57 across the 17 items, and 10 STEM tradition-
469 alists, with an average score of 2.40 across those items.
470 The remaining 25 participants scored in between the progressives and the tra-
471 ditionalists. Our review of the quantitative coding indicated that these individuals
472 could be further subdivided into two groups – those whose views closely followed
473 the most prevalent answers on the same set of 17 questions and those whose answers

REVISED PROOF

7FL01 [7] Many of the academic traditionalists had liberal or progressive views on economic and political issues
7FL02 outside of academe.

8FL01 [8] We did not use the following questions to identify STEM progressives, traditionalists, and bridging
8FL02 faculty: (1) multicultural emphasis in curriculum; (2) use of students' preferred pronouns; (3) formation
8FL03 of implicit bias reporting teams; (4) systemic bias exists on campus; (5) listening sessions in cases of
8FL04 student complaints; and (6) renaming of buildings. Not all respondents had sufficient background knowl-
8FL05 edge to fully understand these questions. In the case of systemic bias on campus, idiosyncratic personal
8FL06 experiences also seemed to figure too prominently in the responses of some participants. For example, a
8FL07 respondent who heard about a robbery on campus involving a non-student used this incident to general-
8FL08 ize about systemic bias on campus.

showed a more idiosyncratic pattern on those 17 questions.[9] We characterize those whose views closely followed the modal pattern as bridging faculty. The 15 bridging faculty were neither consistently progressive nor consistently traditionalist. Instead, they were highly supportive of DEI policies, convinced that systemic racism existed in American society, but also supportive of free speech protections (albeit in some cases with hesitations) and skeptical of or opposed to ideas and practices of anti-racist activists.[10] Our statistical analysis is based not on the full set of 47 subjects but rather on 37 subjects, excluding the 10 subjects whose responses showed no clearly identifiable pattern on the 17 questions.

Mean scores on the 17 items for members of the three groups are provided in Table 1.

We now take up our second research question on the identity-related characteristics of members of the three sets of actors. In Table 2, we distinguish the three sets of actors by their socio-demographic characteristics. Because of the relatively small number of participants in each of the three sets of actors, we focus here on statistically significant bivariate differences.

As indicated in Table 2, STEM progressives were distinguished by their youth, their Anglo-American nationalities, their fields of study, and, not surprisingly, by their "very liberal" political identifications. The average age of the progressives was younger than that of members of the other two groups, and it was statistically lower than the average age of the bridging faculty. Only one progressive claimed a non-Anglo-American nationality, whereas 29 percent of all participants said they were born outside of the U.S. or British Commonwealth countries. Nearly three out of five were life scientists compared to just 10 percent of traditionalists. Nearly all of the progressives characterized their political views as "very liberal" and one characterized his views as "far left." Only one characterized herself as "moderately liberal" and none said that their political views were centrist or more conservative.

STEM traditionalists were distinguished by their racial-ethnic identities, their nationalities, their fields of study, and their political identifications. Many had significant professional attainments. Given the emphasis among anti-racist activists on White privilege, it is notable that five of the 10 traditionalists were non-White and one was of mixed racial-ethnic background. This was nearly twice the proportion of non-Whites and those of mixed racial background in the total sample. Seventy percent were born outside the U.S. or British Commonwealth countries compared to 29 percent of all participants. Nine of the ten were physical scientists or engineers compared to two out of five progressives and bridging faculty. Traditionalists also tended to characterize themselves as moderately liberal or centrist rather than very liberal.

[9] Those with idiosyncratic views included, for example, one professor who spent nearly all of his time in the lab and expressed confusion about the meaning of several terms used in the interview protocol. Another participant with idiosyncratic views expressed views that were highly attuned to gender inequalities but were much more skeptical about racial-ethnic inequalities. For most faculty interviewed, views on gender and racial-ethnic inequalities went hand in hand.

[10] We confirmed and slightly revised our initial visual classification of those who fit the modal pattern by conducting a K-means cluster analysis.

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

Table 1 Views of DEI Policies, Free Speech, and Anti-Racism in Three Campus Groups

Variable	Progressives *N=12*	Traditionalists *N=10*	Bridgers *N=15*
A. DEI Policies			
Grad Admissions – Weight Race	$1.00^{2,3}$	$2.10^{1,3}$	$1.47^{1,2}$
Grad Admissions – Weight Gender	1.08^{2}	$1.90^{1,3}$	1.27^{2}
Hiring – Weight Race	1.08^{2}	$2.70^{1,3}$	1.20^{2}
Hiring – Weight Gender	1.17^{2}	$2.50^{1,3}$	1.27^{2}
Diversity is Public Mission	1.17^{2}	$1.90^{1,3}$	1.00^{2}
Diversity Statements – Required	1.08^{2}	$2.60^{1,3}$	1.33^{2}
Diversity Statements – Initial Screen	2.25	2.70	2.80
B. Free Speech			
Hate Speech Ban Okay	2.27	2.90	2.47
Micro-aggression Ban Okay	2.00^{2}	2.80^{1}	2.47
Provide Safe Spaces on Campus	1.33^{2}	2.30^{1}	1.67
Provide Implicit Bias Trainings	1.00^{2}	$1.70^{1,3}$	1.13^{2}
Disinvite Offensive Speakers	1.83^{2}	2.60^{1}	2.20
Shut Down Offensive Speakers	2.42	2.90	2.93
C. Anti-Racism			
Systemic Racism Exists in Society	1.08	1.50^{3}	1.00^{2}
Anti-Racist Terms Used Correctly	$1.42^{2,3}$	2.70^{1}	2.20^{1}
Grading Accommodations Allowed for Protesting Students	1.83^{2}	2.80^{1}	2.33
Remove Police from Campus	$2.08^{2,3}$	2.90^{1}	2.80^{1}

Note: Superscript 1 indicates significantly different from Progressives. Superscript 2 indicates significantly different from Traditionalists. Superscript 3 indicates significantly different from Bridging Faculty. Differences are treated as statistically significant at $p \leq .05$. Lower scores indicate more support for specific policies or initiatives.

REVISED PROOF

The 15 bridging faculty were distinguished by their age, their fields of study, and especially by their experience in university administration. They were the oldest group among the participants and statistically older than progressives. Like progressives, however, they tended to be life scientists rather than physical scientists or engineers. Most notably seven of these people (47 percent) had served in the university administration, either as department chairs, divisional deans, or chairs of the faculty senate. Another was married to a senior administrator. By contrast, only one of the progressives and only one of the traditionalists had administrative experience. Bridging faculty were somewhat less likely to use scientific terms such as "evidence" and "data" to justify their positions than members of the other two groups, though not by a statistically significant margin.

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

Table 2 Bivariate Relationships: Three Sets of Actors

Variable	Progressives N=12 Mean	Traditionalists N=10 Mean	Bridging Faculty N=15 Mean
Age	42.08	51.50	56.87[1]
Gender (Male)	0.58	0.70	0.60
White	0.83	0.50[1,2]	0.93
Asian	0.25	0.40	0.07
Hispanic	0.00	0.10	0.07
Life Sciences	0.58	0.10[1,2]	0.60
Tenured	0.58	0.80	0.93
Full Professor	0.25	0.50	0.53
Political Ideology	2.25	3.10[1]	2.73
Scientific Terms Used	1.42	1.60	0.87
Administrative Experience	0.08	0.10	0.53[1,2]

Note: Superscript indicates statistically significant differences between groups at p<.05. Superscript 1 refers to statistically significant differences with progressives. Superscripts 1,2 refers to statistically significant differences between the designated group and the two other groups.

REVISED PROOF

522 Neither gender nor tenure status showed statistically significant differences in dis-
523 tribution across the three groups.[11]

524 *The Sources of Actors' Positions on the Issues*

525 We now turn to our third research question concerning the sources of participants'
526 beliefs about the issues. We discuss themes in the discourse of members of each
527 of the three groups below, using quotes from the interviews to illustrate values and
528 beliefs that were prominent and distinctive among members of the groups. Com-
529 ments relevant to the themes we highlight were not expressed by every person in the
530 groups, but they were expressed by several, and they were also themes closely tied,
531 in most cases, to the identities of members of the groups. For purposes of analy-
532 sis, we focus on the cultural scripts that actors drew upon. We also show the links,
533 where they are evident, between these cultural scripts and the identity characteristics
534 of participants. The organizational status interests of participants must in most cases
535 be inferred because they are rarely stated directly.

536 Academic Progressives. Prominent themes among progressives concerned the
537 responsibilities of privileged people, caring and compassion as special virtues con-
538 sistent with these privileged positions, and interpretations of the public mission of

11FL01 [11] The finding for gender is surprising given the survey evidence that female faculty tend to be more
11FL02 supportive than male faculty of progressive policies and movements on campus (Honeycutt, Stevens, and
11FL03 Kaufmann 2023) and may be due to the limited representation of women in the sample population.

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

the university in light of these priorities and their own commitments to diversity. This constellation of responsibilities, concerns, and priorities led progressives to support the analyses and prescriptions of anti-racist activists and to take a deferential stance in relation to under-represented minority students. Each of these themes is connected to a publicly available cultural script.

For the STEM progressives, the experience of privileged backgrounds created special responsibilities toward those born into less fortunate circumstances:

> "I'm White, I have benefited from White privilege, I absolutely have. And so, I have to be, like, 'Okay. That's very uncomfortable.' But I have to then, wherever I can, use that advantage to help stop this from persisting in the future." (junior professor, life sciences)
> "I'm a representative of the traditional group that's always been lucky to have these positions. I do try to share the fact that it's not grades *per se* or whatever that has got me the privilege of being able to have this lifestyle…. These particular issues (of being honest about privileges) are part of building a just society which involves also a responsible and informed society, looking to the future based on our understanding of what actually has happened in the past." senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics).
> "I think that we have an obligation to people who have been excluded, not due their own fault, but because of the situations that they grew up in, which may have lacked opportunities others had." (junior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

The emphasis on the responsibilities of privileged people is a theme resonant for STEM faculty in our sample from White, Anglo-American backgrounds. People with these backgrounds were the only ones to articulate these themes. They are outlooks with obvious religious overtones, but we were unable to determine the extent to which religious upbringings may have been an influence on those who expressed them.

Caring and concern about the views of under-represented minority students were seen as consistent with the responsibilities of privilege:

> "When students are from underrepresented backgrounds, they're experiencing challenges that many of the faculty have no insight into…And so, it's important for those students to find a space where they can be there, (to) express those frustrations." (junior professor, life sciences)
> "If such a code (against hate speech) was put forward by students, for example, and they made a compelling argument (about it), I could see myself being very much in favor of that." (junior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)
> "And I think that the people who believe they have been wronged, should absolutely be heard. Not just people sitting in a room and pretending to listen, but… (in a way so that) you don't get to argue with what the person says…. You have to hear their perspective…. (I)t helps people who have been the victim of something to name what has happened to them, and just talk about what the negative consequences are for them. And, then, it helps

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

> the person who… conducted the action against this person… how it was interpreted, how it impacted someone else." (junior professor, life sciences)

Some also drew on scripts about the public mission of the University, interpreted to highlight the centrality of diversity rather than other public missions, such as leadership development or the outreach of academic experts to all institutions and groups in the state. This idea is embedded in university documents on the public mission of the university and is frequently evoked on campus.

> "Yes (diversity should be part of the mission of the university). I believe that that's part of the mission of (the University) as it already exists. We're a public institution. We're funded by taxpayers of this state to serve the people of this state and all their diversity." (junior professor, life sciences)

Given the emphasis on diversity in the university's public representation, the under-representation of minorities seemed to these STEM progressives to be a special failing and one that required determined actions to counter.

> "But I think that there (is), like, the status quo in which certain groups are radically underrepresented in certain fields. (It) is something that you can only really fix with a kind of proactive approach, at least in the interim. And so, as a strategy for addressing an historical imbalance to get it back to something more representative, I think it's – I don't see another option, really." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)
>
> "I think it's pretty well known that we recognize the contributions of the majority successful group more than those of underrepresented groups. So, I think it might take a little more effort to seek out materials that reflect the contributions of minoritized groups, but I think it's really important to do, particularly considering the student population that we're serving here…" (junior professor, life sciences)

The responsibilities of privileged people, the emphasis on caring consistent with the responsibilities of privileged people, and the identification of the university's public mission as diversification led most of the STEM progressives to be receptive to the ideas of the anti-racism movement. These ideas have circulated widely on U.S. university campuses in recent years:

> "Structural racism exists everywhere, so it also exists on campus. And so, my understanding of that term is that like all of our systems are founded in systems that are racist. And so, everything is a perpetuation of those systems, really. So, policies that we devise within the university have arisen in white supremacists' culture, and so even if they're not explicitly seeming like that, they have origins within that. So, it is worth examining most of our (culture) - most of the things that happen." (junior professor, life sciences)
>
> "I just don't view structural racism as like a collection of things. It's like the terrain itself, and like systems that are still profoundly structured by like the legacy of racism – and slavery in this country…. It's like if you get used to

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

walking around ground that's like tilted at this angle, you come to just like view it as flat…. And so, the thing about structural racism is it's hard to see…. It's like layers upon layers of systems that we depend on for society to function, but that are also racist – and that cannot just be like razed to the ground and rebuilt in some way…. Like, it doesn't matter what you feel about being personally racist, you are participating in racism." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

Whites of Anglo-American origin were the primary supporters of anti-racism as an analysis of the injustices perpetrated by their predecessors. Their sense of the injustice may have been greater, in part, because of the background characteristics they shared with those historically responsible for these exclusions.

Academic Traditionalists. Prominent themes among traditionalists included skepticism about the motivations of authorities and concerns about the priority of academic quality in a diversity-conscious university. Quality concerns, in particular, led to skepticism about, and sometimes outright opposition to, campus administrators and progressive activists. Ideas about the chilling effect of illiberal regimes are publicly available scripts especially prominent among those familiar with authoritarian regimes (Repucci and Slipowitz 2022) while quality issues are an ever-present feature of the discourse climate in American research universities and are regularly reinforced by their merit reward systems (see, e.g., King 2018).

Several of the traditionalists who were born in Europe described direct experiences with cynical or repressive regimes. These experiences led them to distrust elites purporting to act in the interests of the broader community:

"(The bureaucrat's) job is to now decide what the societal benefits of tipping the scale would be. And perhaps my (understanding) is biased by growing up in (an authoritarian country). I've seen ideologically driven bureaucrats. I don't trust any of them. And before I trust any of them, I would like to hear an answer to a simple question: 'Please describe me the last day on the job of that person? Will they ever hang a banner (saying) mission accomplished?' Or will this become a mission creep, where these people will, in order to progress their own careers, will invent further and further ways of measuring, making fine adjustments, readjustments and whatnot to what they're trying to achieve? I think it's the latter." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

"(Politicians and ideologues) are dividing people…Slavery was terrible. I mean, of course you should recognize (that)… but you shouldn't make people hate…other people. I think that's what the outcome of (the movement) is… (The activists) are being manipulated by much larger forces. They don't even realize it, and these forces don't have minorities or anybody (else's)… interest at heart. They have (a) much different interest, creating chaos and opposition between minorities, majorities, (and) other(s) who (are) not officially represented in the conflicts." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

REVISED PROOF

667 Here nationalities outside the Anglo-American sphere, particularly those more
668 strongly influenced by the experience of repressive authorities, created an elective
669 affinity between scripts skeptical of authorities and the experiences of several of the
670 traditionalists.
671 The views of the traditionalists were also shaped by their sense that nonacademic
672 values had been elevated above academic values by the campus administration.

673 "I'm probably in the minority of people on our campus in having quality as
674 really the highest value. Of course, it's very important to feel like your work
675 is worthwhile and you're making a difference, and that's especially true for
676 people in the academic realm, right? I mean, it's not quite the same if you're
677 working in a grocery store or whatever …. I don't think that the environment
678 is very welcoming to anybody who's going to do anything but be aggressive
679 toward, 'We got to have more underrepresented groups. We have to have more
680 diversity regardless of what effect that has,' and placing that value higher than
681 academic quality." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

682 The ideal of scholarly quality also served as a positive reference point for other
683 traditionalists:

684 "...I'm afraid that I don't recognize myself anymore in academia since two or
685 three years, at least in the (university) because it has changed so much, and
686 it has narrowed its focus so much and its perception of things and its goals. I
687 don't recognize myself in the goals of this institution anymore because they
688 (have) lost track (of the primary purpose of academic work) ..." (senior profes-
689 sor, physical sciences/mathematics)
690 "It (a diversity statement) doesn't tie in directly to the job, to do my particular
691 work in my field (I would oppose it). It really doesn't make a difference what
692 race I am, what gender I am, what sexual orientation I am. What matters is the
693 ideas that I have going forward, so being competent and that is really the …
694 foremost thing. And if that really is the foremost thing, then it strikes me that a
695 commitment to diversity is an ideological statement that everybody's being…
696 asked to subscribe to. So…it strikes me that's outside of the purview of the
697 mission of (a) university..." (senior professor, life sciences)

698 Senior professors who have been rewarded for their professional accomplish-
699 ments have an interest in asserting quality concerns because assessments of quality
700 in the university's merit reward system have been consequential in their careers. The
701 link between institutional scripts about quality and the careers of many of the tradi-
702 tionalists in this sample are evident. In addition, nearly all of the traditionalists were
703 physical scientists, engineers, or mathematicians. It is possible that these fields, with
704 their focus on inanimate objects of research and their search for law-like regularities,
705 tend to reinforce affinities with ostensibly objective, quality-oriented scripts.
706 Oppositional sentiments were more evident in the responses of traditionalists
707 than in those of progressives. The university administration came in for criticism
708 because of the way it undercut professional judgment in the name of diversity goals:

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

> "(T)hey (the administration) (are) hanging their hat on … diversity and stuff like that rather than on the quality part. And, gosh, (a senior administrator's) the worst offender as far as I'm concerned. I know a lot of people who had my attitude, and they've all moved to other (campuses)." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)
>
> "(T)here actually was a quota imposed by the dean of the college…(I)t prevented the university from making a faculty appointment that would have been a very high-quality scholar. And so, in that sense, it diminishes our stature and our desire to move forward in quality metrics, not just metrics of diversity, equity and inclusion, right? … Hiring senior people from other institutions is always a very, very challenging matter. And when you apply a very hard quota, then it just becomes impossible. And that was what the dean did in this case… So, that was really counter to the goal of increasing (the) academic reputation and quality of the institution." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

Some of the traditionalists also expressed disapproval of the influence of younger, politically more progressive faculty members who they saw as imposing an illiberal orthodoxy consistent with the priorities of administrators:

> "I think a lot of the faculty ... in my opinion, they (have) become very liberal. They tend to hold very strong views about things, and I've been here for, what, close to 30 years, and… I see an evolution of thoughts, where people, younger humanities faculty especially, are becoming more aggressive about holding you to (certain) views, or holding you to (certain) standards, and they become very aggressive about it." (senior professor, engineering)
>
> "… (M)y sense of comfort in expressing my views has gone down because the reactions of people are so violent and people have stopped being thinking human beings in some cases. But it seems especially with the younger faculty…(it) looks like they've been kind of formatted and ready to (use) speech codes and all these things…(T)hey are like policemen and… (they) lose a sense of proportionality and respect (for) people who have had, so far, a lot more achievement than they (have had) ..." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

Bridging Faculty. The views of the bridging faculty were strongly influenced by their awareness of the priorities of granting agencies and by their experiences in university administration. Cultural scripts about the priorities of granting agencies are widely circulated on campuses among STEM faculty, and so too are expectations concerning the implementation of university DEI policies. Their concerns about the rhetoric and practices of anti-racist activists may reflect the same managerial priorities in so far as they focus on the potentially problematic consequences of activists' priorities for the stability of the university's organization.

Most bridging faculty were senior professors and they were strongly influenced by their experiences in a research environment in which major funders have made it clear that they value diversity:

REVISED PROOF

752 "Most NSF grants today absolutely demand that there's some degree of
753 outreach in any program that you have. And usually that means, educating
754 usually younger people in science, and often we're targeting elementary
755 schools, middle schools that are really very diverse and need to see that sci-
756 ence is a career path…It would be hard for me to mandate it, but I see my
757 students doing it without a mandate." (senior professor, life sciences)
758 "So, the federal government – and, of course, I also am used to writing
759 about broader impact (as required for federal research grants) – it seems
760 to drive some of the inclusiveness that is affecting the field through these
761 kind of requirements for grants. I mean, now we – for two years now -we've
762 had in our department a standing committee on broadening participation in
763 computing." (senior professor, engineering)

764 Some were also influenced by their experiences in a university administration
765 that has for many years worked to implement policies responsive to these pri-
766 orities. Many had participated in the formation of faculty cultures in their own
767 departments to better represent DEI commitments:

768 "I don't care what their most important column (in rating applicants for fac-
769 ulty positions) is, but this column (for diversity) is just as important…You
770 create a column called human diversity, and however you score it, that col-
771 umn is just as important as your other most important column. Those are the
772 two most important things, whatever you decide…I am totally convinced
773 that having a diverse faculty improves both the quality of the teaching and
774 the quality of the research and the quality of the training. I've read enough
775 that I am totally convinced on that. So, I just tell my faculty that is what
776 you're going to do. And if I don't see evidence of it, I don't sign off on hir-
777 ing somebody." (senior professor, life sciences)
778 "There would have been active discussions (related to racial reckoning),
779 nothing would have been controversial…. I think it's the nature of my field
780 because it's always been an international field, and we've always had people
781 from all over the world participating in research. And for that reason, you
782 have to embrace diversity because that's what science is, and has always
783 been, especially in my particular field… And also, to be perfectly honest
784 with you, when we interviewed candidates, people are chosen so they'll be
785 good citizens. You could have the most brilliant person in the world, and if
786 they don't have the potential to be a good citizen, they wouldn't get hired by
787 my department." (senior professor, life sciences)

788 The official position of the university is that no conflict exists between aca-
789 demic freedom and diversity policies). The bridging faculty, nearly half of whom
790 had administrative experience, either saw no bases of conflict or were willing to
791 abridge freedom of expression slightly where it came into conflict with the sen-
792 sitivities of under-represented members of the campus community. Here too the
793 experience of bridging faculty in university administration reinforced a mana-
794 gerial mindset that allowed for the balancing of multiple objectives rather than
795 encouraging choices among them.

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

796 "The university needs to be a place where all ideas and all topics are discussable, where it is okay to share things that potentially are offensive or ideas that in polite society would be considered controversial. That's the point of (academia). It's for us to be able to discuss any potential topic… At the university, it's a different environment where ideas are meant to be discussed and challenged. I don't think we should be putting restrictions on how we interact with each other here." (senior professor, life sciences)

803 "I'm a (American Civil Liberties Union) member, right? So, I'm a big proponent of free speech. But I'm not a proponent of hate speech, for example, right? So, I do - the trouble is - …most reasonable people can agree on a lot of things that should be unacceptable. But there may be a gray area of things where - and this is changing, right? ...Terms that perhaps were acceptable to take on a different connotation and become offensive, right? So, language evolves. And so, I think it's a little bit tricky." (senior professor, life sciences)

810 At the same time, concerns about the use of terms like "White supremacy" and "White fragility" in divisive ways were evident in the interviews with bridging faculty and these concerns sometimes brought out strong emotions:

813 "In my experience… I (see these terms) used basically as an equivalent to 'Shut up. You don't know what you're talking about. You cannot have an opinion. You cannot have anything. Shut up.' So, I think they're misused and that's unfortunate…Especially (the term) white fragility. As you see, that's a pet peeve…of mine. It's used indiscriminately by people of color against and in fact against other minorities that seem to them white. And so, I've been called that. I take offense to that. I mean, after all, I am a member of a minority. So, in that respect, yeah, I think they are misused..." (senior professor, physical sciences/mathematics)

822 "(These terms get) used as a crutch, as an argument crutch, when there's a disagreement about any of the other things that we just got through talking about, 'If you don't agree with me, you're a white supremacist.' Well, that's not necessarily the case. There might be a million reasons why I'm disagreeing with you on an issue about race." (senior professor, life sciences)

827 Unlike the progressives, the bridging faculty also argued that university policy could go too far by infringing on the faculty's expertise and prerogatives or by accommodating the most vocal people on campus in problematic ways:

830 "I don't think (a diversity statement) should be the initial screen (in faculty hiring), because when you - for most academic positions, they're defined by a scholarly discipline, and the contribution to the university, say, research environment and things like that. So, you need to be able to fill that role first." (senior professor, life sciences)

835 "(T)his whole DEI thing is changing –(It) can be, in some cases, changing people in the wrong way, making them feel entitled, making them feel aggressive…. And it hinders the job we're trying to do, which is to teach and to promote education and learning. So, there is a limit… I don't know the solution to

REVISED PROOF

how we can (set the limit). But there has to be a balance...” (senior professor, life sciences)

The experiences of many of the bridging faculty in administering policy and managing conflict may lie behind these interests in establishing the legitimate boundaries of discourse and in their protectiveness toward established prerogatives of the faculty.

The Theory of Fields and the Case of Campus Conflict

We now take up our fourth research question on the usefulness of a leading theory of intra-organizational conflict for explaining our case. In our view, the theory of strategic action fields provides valuable illumination of the case of intra-organizational conflict we have studied. For purposes of showing how it illuminates our case, we draw on the data from our study and also from histories of the university relevant to our case (see, e.g., Brint and Frey 2023; Douglass 2020; King 2018; Smelser 2010 and the literatures cited therein). This evidence also shows what elaborations in the theory may be necessary to fully account for cases like ours.

The case can, in principle, be analyzed as a conflict between traditional academics (the incumbents) and academic progressives (the challengers) moderated and adjudicated by leaders of the campus IGU. State and university policies promoting a stronger emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion have created uncertainty and disruption in the structure of power and meaning. Uncertainty and disruption have been exacerbated by the rise of the anti-racist social movement which has gained supporters within and beyond the university. Building on years of piecemeal change, the national protests that followed the George Floyd murder in June 2020 can plausibly be interpreted as an exogenous shock that disrupted the academic system so that challengers experienced the opportunity for developing a new compromise or a new settlement more conducive to their interests and identities and traditionalists were motivated to come out publicly in defense of the interests and identities they consider fundamental.

The eventual outcome of the conflict remains uncertain but there is a widespread perception, at least among the traditional academics in our sample, that progressives have gained influence over time. Indirect evidence of a compromise settlement tilting toward progressives can be found in the responses that members of the two groups gave to our questions about how comfortable they felt expressing their views on DEI issues. Nine of the 12 progressives said they were “very” or “somewhat” comfortable expressing their views about DEI issues, and the same number said they were “more comfortable” expressing their views now than they had been in the past. By contrast, six of the ten traditionalists said they were “somewhat” or “very” uncomfortable expressing their views, and seven of the ten said they were less comfortable expressing their views now than they had been in the past. These results would, under other circumstances, be considered counter-intuitive, given the seniority and established scholarly reputations of most of the traditionalists in our sample.

More conservative U.S. states are, by contrast, in the process of enacting very different settlements. In these states, governors and legislatures have intervened

REVISED PROOF

882 to prevent progressives from gaining influence and to reduce the administrative
883 resources they control (Young and Friedman 2022). If these actions withstand legal
884 challenges, the new settlement in these conservative states will put more authority
885 in the hands of the state officials and will undermine the position of progressive
886 academics.

887 Each of these relationships is broadly consistent with propositions of the theory.
888 The analytical vocabulary developed in the theory is also applicable to our case.

889 At the same time, certain features of our case do not fit the theory well. We now
890 turn to a discussion of those features of the theory that seem to us to require elabora-
891 tion or modification to fit cases like ours.

892 Fligstein and McAdam (2012) emphasized exogenous shocks as precipitators of
893 conflict. In our case, a series of policy decisions beginning at the turn of the 21st cen-
894 tury shifted the balance of power between the nominal incumbents and their chal-
895 lengers (Brint and Frey 2023). Aware of the ascendance of new population groups
896 and the political pressures that have developed in their wake (Smelser 1993), the
897 university administration enacted policy changes to place a higher priority on repre-
898 sentation and on the construction of a supportive and protective campus for students
899 and faculty of color (Brint and Frey 2023). These incremental policy changes have,
900 we believe, been more important in the conflict between nominal incumbents and
901 their challengers than any exogenous shocks to the campus or the university system.

902 In our case, demographic change, accompanied by episodic protests, appears to
903 have been the most important sources of incremental policy changes. University
904 administrators have been aware of the changing demography of the state for many
905 decades (Smelser 1993) and state-level policymakers have encouraged more ener-
906 getic actions to improve the representativeness of the staff, faculty, and students in
907 the university system to reflect these demographic changes (Brint and Frey 2023).
908 These pressures have led beginning in the mid-2000s to a series of policies to speed
909 the diversification of the campuses. The policies included bias reporting forms,
910 state-funded programs to advance faculty diversity, the use of diversity statements
911 in hiring and promotion, the expansion of DEI offices, the appointment of equity
912 advisors in the academic departments, and curriculum reform efforts to add race and
913 gender-related content to courses (Ibid.)

914 It seems entirely plausible that incremental policy changes can have a similar
915 influence in other strategic action fields, tipping the balance of power and influ-
916 encing the outcome of any external shocks that may also arise. Incremental policy
917 changes can be brought on by any number of pressures and incentives in the external
918 environment, including such factors as changes in the market, changes in the regu-
919 latory environment, and changes in public priorities. Whatever their source, incre-
920 mental policy changes can change the landscape for conflict, elevating groups and
921 individuals who support the new policies and creating obstacles for groups and indi-
922 viduals who oppose them (Mahoney and Thelen 2010).

923 In the theory of fields, exogenous shocks and the destabilization of nearby
924 SAFs create the conditions for episodes of contention. We would make a distinc-
925 tion between skirmishes and potentially destabilizing episodes of contention. Our
926 interviewees reported many skirmishes in their departments over the issues we
927 have investigated, and we know from the literature that these skirmishes have also

REVISED PROOF

928 occurred on other campuses, as well as in campus and system-wide faculty senate
929 meetings (see, e.g., Brint and Frey 2023; King 2018; Smelser 2010; Soucek 2022).
930 We think it likely that some level of conscious network or party organization is
931 necessary for more momentous, destabilizing episodes of contention to occur. We
932 also think it likely that exogenous shocks can and often do serve as precipitators of
933 organization.[12]

934 The theory of fields identifies three main types of actors in intra-organizational
935 conflicts: incumbents, challengers, and leaders of IGUs. Groups in the middle like
936 our bridging faculty play a role in managing conflicts but are not explicitly consid-
937 ered in the theory. We think they would be an important addition. In our case, bridg-
938 ing faculty played an important role in managing conflict and defining the bounda-
939 ries of legitimate discourse. These managerial skills led progressives to experience a
940 receptive environment in their departments while assuring traditionalists that overly-
941 aggressive rhetoric would meet resistance and professional expertise in areas of edu-
942 cational policy would be respected. For these reasons, we interpret bridging faculty
943 as closer to the true incumbents in our case and we think progressives and tradition-
944 alists would be better treated as rivals competing for influence.

945 Cases like ours involve unsettled fields in which collective action frames have not
946 crystallized and socially skilled actors have not attracted the attention and energy
947 of large numbers of colleagues. In such cases, a change of terminology to identify
948 the major groups involved in intra-organizational conflict may be desirable. Instead
949 of the terms "incumbents" and "challengers," we suggest "competitors." This term
950 seems apt in so far as neither the academic progressives nor the academic tradition-
951 alists dominated positions or cultural understandings in the SAF we studied. Groups
952 in the middle like the bridging faculty in our study can, by contrast, be legitimately
953 identified as "incumbents" if they exercise the dominant cultural framing in the
954 institution and effectively enforce the boundaries of legitimate action. Where these
955 powers are less evident or do not exist, groups in the middle like our bridging fac-
956 ulty would be better identified as a third "competitor" group. It is also possible that
957 groups in the middle may slip back and forth between "incumbent" and "competi-
958 tor" status, depending on how conflict unfolds.[13]

959 Further, in cases like ours it is more accurate to use the term "quasi-groups"
960 rather than conflict groups. As defined by Dahrendorf (1959), quasi-groups lack
961 formal organization and have only latent interests in common. Affinities in outlook
962 exist among members of quasi-groups and similar attitudes may develop in relation
963 to disruptive policies or disruptive events, but members of quasi-groups are not nec-
964 essarily aware of one another as potential allies and do not necessarily act in concert

REVISED PROOF

12FL01 [12] The anti-racism movement is arguably an example of an organized conflict group. We also see evi-
12FL02 dence of organization among academic traditionalists in reaction to the anti-racism movement. On many
12FL03 campuses in the U.S., communities of academic traditionalists have emerged under the auspices of a
12FL04 national organization, the Heterodox Academy (see Heterodox Academy 2023).

13FL01 [13] Because our sample consists exclusively of faculty members, we are unable to explore fully the social
13FL02 skills and power dynamics that come into play during periods of contention, specifically those involving
13FL03 members of the university administration, the group Fligstein and McAdam (2012) refer to as the inter-
13FL04 nal governance unit.

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

965 in relation to disruptions. Additional organizational efforts are necessary for quasi-
966 groups to become conflict groups with manifest interests and shared interpretive
967 frames.
968 The theory of fields emphasizes that both interests and identities provide the
969 motive power for conflict. It is clear that interests and identities are involved in
970 the oppositions we have analyzed, for example in the tensions we found between
971 younger Anglo-American scientists and their older, more accomplished European
972 and Asian born colleagues. Nevertheless, we think the theory's emphasis misses
973 the way conflict is framed culturally and how this cultural framing serves as the
974 proximate source for opposing positions. Specifically, our study suggests that the
975 proximate sources of positioning among the protagonists were rooted in the cultural
976 scripts that protagonists used to understand, explain, and justify their positions. In
977 our case, some of these scripts, such as the ideas of the anti-racist movement and the
978 cautionary literature on authoritarian regimes, were externally created. Some others,
979 such as diversity as a mission of the public university and criteria for evaluating aca-
980 demic merit, were created by agents of the institution and embedded in institutional
981 policies.
982 Cultural scripts differ from the framing processes and collective action frames
983 emphasized by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). We see the following differences: (1)
984 Framing processes are more strategic and interest oriented than the cultural scripts
985 we find in our data. The cultural scripts we identify revolve to a greater degree
986 around issues of justice and morality than strategy and interest. (2) Cultural scripts
987 are not as tightly tied to the social situation of the members of the groups we identify
988 than collective action frames would be. We see less expressions of widely shared
989 cultural understandings concerning the SAF than the appearance of notable elective
990 affinities between actor's social situations and their cultural scripts. (3) Although
991 framing processes undoubtedly have occurred on our case study campus, they appear
992 to be highly localized; for most of our interview subjects widely shared frames have
993 not supplanted the varied cultural understandings that lead subjects to be identifiable
994 as members of one of the three quasi-groups we have discussed. Our use of "cul-
995 tural scripts" and Fligstein and McAdam's use of "collective action frames": reflects
996 distinct stages in conflict group formation. In our case, skilled social actors have
997 only begun to emerge and collective action frames have only a weak influence. Flig-
998 stein and McAdam are certainly aware of these early stages in intra-organizational
999 conflict, but they tend to focus on cases where intra-organizational conflicts have
1000 advanced further, that is, where skilled social actors and collective action frames
1001 have emerged.
1002 The theory of fields highlights the role of social skill in the outcomes of intra-
1003 organizational conflict. We do not see strong evidence in our interviews that varia-
1004 tion in social skill distinguished the relative strength of the two challenging groups.
1005 Neither the progressives nor the traditionalists seemed to include individuals with
1006 marked organizational or motivational skills. Rather, incremental policy changes
1007 mattered greatly to the balance of power between progressives and traditionalists.
1008 Policy changes have had the effect of expanding the population of academic progres-
1009 sives and perhaps also of hastening the retirement or separation of many traditional
1010 academics.

REVISED PROOF

The institutionalization of these decisions also created a new coalition between university administrators responsible for implementing and monitoring DEI initiatives and the now larger group of academic progressives. Beyond the effects of coalitions created by policy changes, we see the possibility that identity ties between groups can make a difference in the relative power and influence they enjoy. In our case, progressives shared many commonalities in identity with bridging faculty – like the bridging faculty they tended to be White, Anglo-American in nationality, and life scientists. Traditionalists shared many fewer identity characteristics with members of either of these groups. These commonalities and discontinuities in identity characteristics may have helped to reinforce the ascendant position of progressives in our case.

Figure 2 provides a representation of the Fligstein-McAdam model of intra-organizational conflict as elaborated to account for the findings in our case. The Fligstein-McAdam theory of strategic action fields has demonstrated explanatory power and it has been applied effectively to a variety of cases. We consequently propose these elaborations in a provisory spirit. Analysis of many additional case and comparative studies will be necessary to determine the extent to which they are valuable contributions to the development of the theory and, in so far as they are valuable, the kinds of cases to which they can be usefully applied.

Discussion

In this sample of STEM faculty at a U.S. public research university, progressives were slightly more numerous than traditionalists. This finding tends to contradict those who believe that STEM faculty are more thoroughly embedded in the culture of rationalist inquiry and therefore less likely to endorse policies that could be interpreted to run counter to that culture. Demands for data and evidence related to the controversies were not very evident in the interviews; the average respondent used scientific terms like these to question or support positions less than twice in these hour-long interviews. Instead, STEM faculty appear to be subject to the same currents in the political and social life of universities as are other professors.

The backgrounds of the two opposed groups also confounded expectations. Given the interests with which they are aligned, an expectation would be that progressives are upwardly mobile and traditionalists come from privileged backgrounds. However, in this sample, progressives more often described themselves as coming from privileged rather than disadvantaged backgrounds. Traditionalists, by contrast, were more often from countries outside the Anglo-American sphere and were more often non-White.

We discovered a third important group, one rarely discussed in press reports and opinion pieces on campus conflicts. These bridging faculty tended to be older and more established. They were highly sensitized to the research environment, and they were distinct from the other two groups in their administrative experience. Bridging faculty play an important but largely unacknowledged role in recent campus conflicts. Their support for both DEI policies and free expression,

REVISED PROOF

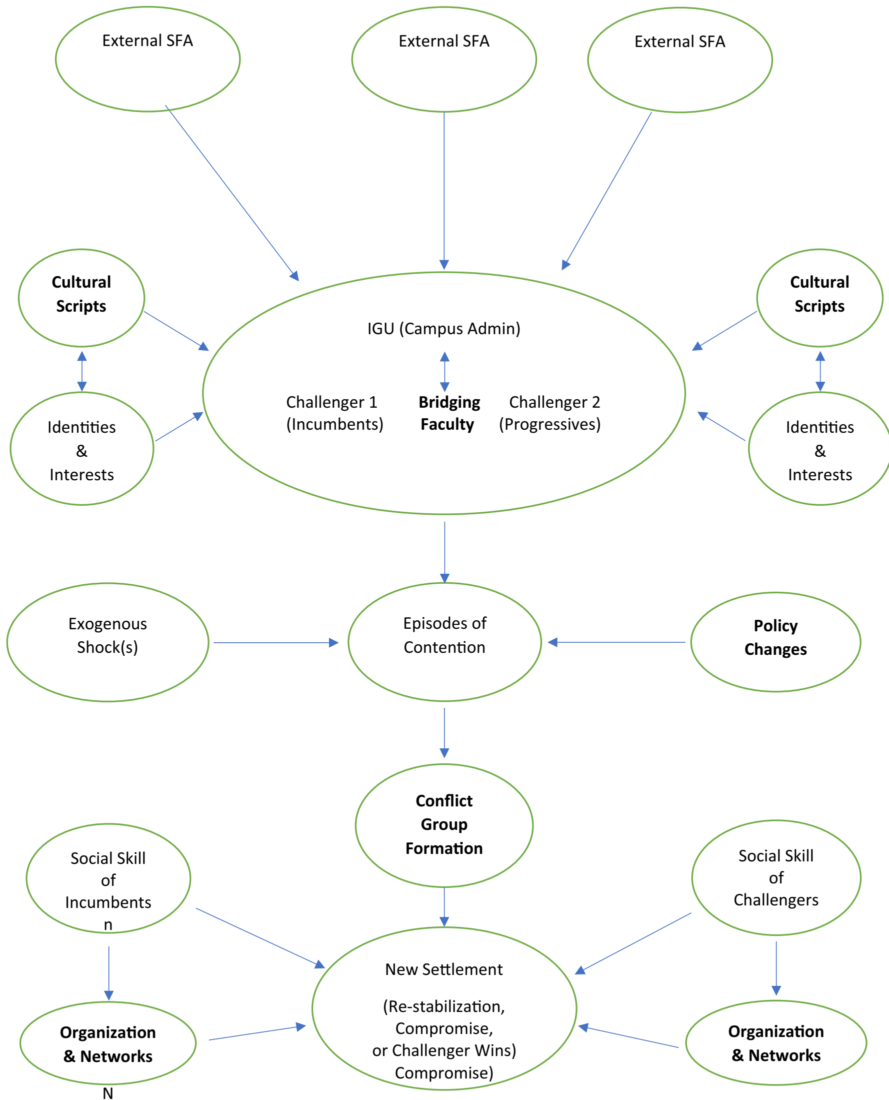

Fig. 2 Modified Fligstein-McAdam Model (new variables in bolded type)

their sensitivity to the impact of systemic racism and sexism, and their simultaneous skepticism about the rhetoric and practices of anti-racism activists made them important actors in managing conflicts on campus.

We have emphasized that individuals' world views are not formed in a vacuum. The cultural scripts adopted by progressives appear to come from studies of the positive impact of diversity, from distinctive definitions of the public mission of universities, and from the writings of anti-racism advocates. Their identities as White, Anglo-Americans appear to have influenced their receptivity to these cultural

scripts. The scripts of the traditionalists, by contrast, had to do with the dangers of repressive authorities and the threats to quality of the new policies and movements for social change. Their experiences and identities also appear to be associated with the adoption of the cultural scripts they found resonant. Some traditionalists had been exposed to authoritarian regimes before emigrating and all of the traditionalists identified closely with their professional accomplishments as researchers. The bridging faculty showed a receptivity to the scripts emanating from funding agencies and the university administration. These scripts attempt to balance or fuse the free inquiry and social improvement missions of universities. Lengthy experience in the research environment and past service in the university administration appear to have created affinities for these cultural scripts among the bridging faculty.

Finally, the study has demonstrated the usefulness of the theory of fields as an aid to the analysis of this case of campus conflict. The analytical vocabulary developed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) is applicable and many of the relationships emphasized in the theory can be applied effectively to our case. At the same time, our research has led us to suggest elaborations to the theory to account for cases like ours. These elaborations focus on the role of incremental policy changes as opposed to exogenous shocks as influences on the prospects of conflict groups; the potential benefit of adding a fourth type of actor, bridging personnel, to the three types of actors currently constituted in the theory; the requirement of organizational development to transform quasi-groups into conflict groups; the proximate influence of cultural scripts on the positioning of the members of quasi-groups; the role of conflict group formation as a prelude to potentially destabilizing episodes of contention; and the influence of identity and network ties, together with social skill, as influences on the prospects of contending groups.

Appendix

See Table 3.

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

Table 3 Question Wording and Mean Scores for Items

	N	Mean	SD
DEI Items (means closer to 1 indicate more support)			
Should the university require implicit bias training?	47	1.23	0.56
Should diversity be part of the mission of the university?	47	1.26	0.57
Should gender be taken into account in graduate admissions?	47	1.51	0.59
Should race be taken into account in graduate admissions?	47	1.62	0.64
Should diversity statements be required of candidates	47	1.62	0.64
Should the university provide "safe spaces" for students who feel marginalized on campus?	47	1.64	0.85
Should gender be taken into account in faculty hiring?	47	1.68	0.73
Should race be taken into account in faculty hiring	47	1.70	0.78
Should the university form implicit bias teams to investigate and			
adjudicate claims of bias by students/faculty of color?	47	2.45	0.75
Should the university use diversity statements as initial screens in faculty hiring?	47	2.60	0.68
Anti-Racism Items (means closer to 1 indicate more support)			
Does systemic racism exist in society	47	1.15	0.47
Should buildings named after people who expressed racist or sexist views be renamed?	47	1.60	0.58
Does systemic racism exist on this campus?	47	1.89	0.81
Are terms like "white supremacy," "white privilege," and "white fragility" used too broadly by anti-racist activists?	47	2.06	0.73
Should the university employ listening sessions without dialogue for students who feel upset by incidents/events?	47	2.17	0.79
Should universities remove police from their campuses?	47	2.36	0.70
Free Speech Items (means closer to 1 indicate more support)			
Should science faculty expand curricula to discuss topics of particular interest to under-represented students?	47	1.77	0.84
Should the use of students' preferred pronouns be required?	47	1.91	0.90
Should the faculty be required to issue "trigger warnings" before discussing material some students may find uncomfortable	47	2.00	0.88
Should student groups have the power to disinvite speakers whose views they consider to be very offensive?	47	2.09	0.65

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024 | Article No : 9517 | Pages : 35 | MS Code : 9517 | Dispatch : 30-3-2024

Table 3 (continued)

	N	Mean	SD
Should the university issue a list of terms that constitute micro-aggressions?	47	2.45	0.80
Should the university issue a list of terms that constitute hate speech?	47	2.60	0.65
Should students be allowed to shut down speakers whose views they consider to be very offensive?	47	2.66	0.67

REVISED PROOF

References

Abbot, Dorian, et al. 2023. In defense of merit in science. *Journal of Controversial Ideas* 3(1): 1. https://doi.org/10.35995/jci03010001.

American Association of University Professors (AAUP). 1940. *1940 Statement on principles of academic freedom and tenure*. Washington DC: AAUP. https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure/

American Association of University Women. (AAUW). 2021. *The stem gap: Women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics*. Washington DC: AAUW. https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/the-stem-gap/

Barber, Paul H., Tyrone B. Hayes, Tracy L. Johnson, Leticia Marquez-Magana, et al. 2020. Systemic racism in higher education. *Science* 369(6910): 1440–1441.

Bartlett, Tom. 2021 (Feb. 15). The anti-racist college. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-antiracist-college/

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean-Claude Passeron. 1977 [1970]. *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. London: Sage Publishers.

Bozic, Branko, Sabina Siebert, and Graeme Martin. 2019. A strategic action fields perspective on organizational trust repair. *European Management Journal* 37(1): 58–66.

Brint, Steven. 2018. *Two cheers for higher education: Why American universities are stronger than ever—and how to meet the challenges they face*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Brint, Steven, and Komi Frey. 2023 (October). *Is the University of California drifting toward conformism? The challenges of representation and the climate for academic freedom*. Berkeley: Center for Studies in Higher Education Research and Occasional Papers Series.

Bronfenbrenner, Uri. 1979. *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Butler, Paul. 2022 (Feb.20). Yes, Georgetown should fire a professor for a racist tweet. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/20/georgetown-should-fire-ilyashapiro-tweet-supreme-court-lesser-black-women/

ChildStats.gov. 2021. *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being 2021*. Washington DC: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics.

Cole, Jonathan R. 2009. *The great American university: Its rise to preeminence, its indispensable national role, why it must be protected*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Dahrendorf, Ralf. 1959. *Class and class conflict in industrial society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Espenshade, Thomas J. and Alexandria Walton Radford. 2009. *No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal: Race andClass in Elite College Admissions and Campus Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

European Parliament. 2023. EU Legislation and Policies to address Racial and Ethnic Discrimination. Brussels: European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/745691/EPRS_BRI(2023)745691_EN.pdf/

Fligstein, Neil, and Doug McAdam. 2012. *A theory of fields*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Furl, Nicholas, P. Jonathan Phillips, and Alice O'Toole. 2002. Face recognition algorithms and other-race effects: Computational mechanisms for a developmental contact hypothesis. *Cognitive Science* 26: 797–815.

German, Komi T. 2020. *Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies in academia: The faculty's response*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Psychology, University of California, Riverside.

German, Komi T., and Sean T. Stevens. 2021. *Scholars under fire: The targeting of scholars for ideological reasons, 2015 to the present*. New York: The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. https://www.thefire.org/research/publications/miscellaneous-publications/scholars-under-fire/scholars-under-fire-full-text/

Global Research Council. 2021. *Gender-Disaggregated Data at the Participating Organisations of the Global Research Council: Results of a Global Survey*. https://globalresearchcouncil.org/fileadmin/documents/GRC_Publications/Survey_Report__GRC_Gender-Disaggregated_Data.pdf/

Goddard, Cliff, and Anna Wierzbicka. 2004. Cultural scripts: What they are and what they are good for. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 1(2): 153–166.

Gross, Neil. 2013. *Why are professors liberal—and why do conservatives care?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

REVISED PROOF

Journal : SmallExtended 11024	Article No : 9517	Pages : 35	MS Code : 9517	Dispatch : 30-3-2024

1143 Guba, Egon, and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In *Handbook*
1144 *of qualitative methods*, eds. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 105–117. Thousand Oaks:
1145 Sage.
1146 Harper, Shaun R., and Isaiah Simmons. 2019. *Black students at public colleges and universities: A*
1147 *50-state report card.* Los Angeles: University of Southern California Race and Equity Center.
1148 https://race.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Pub-1-Harperand-Simmons-Report-Card.pdf/
1149 *Harper's Magazine.* 2020 (July 7). A letter on justice and open debate. *Harper's Magazine.* https://harpe
1150 rs.org/a-letter-on-justice-and-open-debate/
1151 Heterodox Academy. 2023. *Campus community network.* https://heterodoxacademy.org/campus-commu
1152 nity-network/
1153 Honeycutt, Nate, Sean T. Stevens, and Eric Kaufmann. 2023. *The academic mind in 2022: What faculty*
1154 *think about free expression and academic freedom on campus*. Philadelphia: Foundation for Indi-
1155 vidual Rights and Express.
1156 Jencks, Christopher, and David Riesman. 1968. *The academic revolution*. New York: Anchor Books.
1157 King, C. Judson. 2018. *The University of California: Creating, nurturing, and maintaining quality in a*
1158 *public university setting*. Berkeley: Center for Studies in Higher Education.
1159 Kwak, Nacjin, S. Gabriela Gravila, and Francisco O. Ramirez. 2018. Enacting diversity in American
1160 higher education. In *Universities as agencies: Reputation and Professionalization*, eds. Tom Chris-
1161 tensen, Ase Gornitzka, and Francisco O. Ramirez, 209–228. Cham: Springer Nature.
1162 Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Thelen. 2010. A theory of gradual institutional change. In *Explaining*
1163 *Institutional Change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*, eds. James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen,
1164 1–37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1165 McWhorter, John. 2020 (Sept. 1). American academics are really, really worried about
1166 cancel culture. *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/
1167 09/academics-are-really-really-worried-about-their-freedom/615724/
1168 Merriam, Sharan B. 1994. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco:
1169 Jossey-Bass.
1170 Mey, Franziska, and Mark Diesendorf. 2018. Who owns an energy transition? Strategic action fields and
1171 community wind energy in Denmark. *Energy Research & Social Science* 35(2): 108–117.
1172 Moreno, Carlos, Maga Jackson-Triche, Gary Nash, Constance Rice, and Bob Suzuki. 2013 (Oct. 15).
1173 Independent Investigative Report on Acts of Bias and Discrimination Involving Faculty at the Uni-
1174 versity of California, Los Angeles. https://www.ucop.edu/moreno-report/external-review-team-
1175 report-10-15-13.pdf/
1176 Moulton, Stephanie, and Jodi R. Sandfor. 2016. The strategic action field framework for policy imple-
1177 mentation research. *Policy Studies Journal* 45(1): 144–169.
1178 National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). 2020. *U.S. employment higher in the*
1179 *private sector than in the education sector for U.S.-trained doctoral scientists and engineers: Find-*
1180 *ings from the 2019 Survey of Doctorate Recipients*. Washington DC: NCSES. https://ncses.nsf.gov/
1181 pubs/nsf21319/
1182 National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). 2023. *Diversity and STEM: Women,*
1183 *minorities and persons with disabilities.* Washington DC: NCSES. https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf23
1184 315/report/
1185 Obermeyer, Ziad, Brian Power, Christine Vogeli, and Sidhel Millanathan. 2019. Dissecting racial bias in
1186 an algorithm used to measure the health of populations. *Science* 366(6464): 447–453.
1187 Park, Julie, and Nida Denson. 2009. Attitudes and advocacy: Understanding faculty views on racial/eth-
1188 nic diversity. *Journal of Higher Education* 80(4): 415–438.
1189 Parker, John N., and Ugo Corte. 2017. Placing collaborative circles in strategic action fields: Explaining
1190 differences between highly creative groups. *Sociological Theory* 35(4): 261–287.
1191 PEN America. 2023 (May 23). *More than meets the DEI.* New York: PEN America. https://pen.org/
1192 more-than-meets-the-dei/
1193 Peter, Marc K., Corin Kraft, and Johan Lindeque. 2020. Strategic action fields of digital transformation:
1194 An exploration of the strategic action fields of Swiss SMEs and large enterprises. *Journal of Strat-*
1195 *egy and Management* 13(1): 160–180.
1196 Pinker, Steven. 2021. *Rationality: What it is, why it seems scarce, and why it matters*. New York: Viking.
1197 Powell, Michael. 2021a (Feb. 24). Inside a battle over race, class, and power at Smith College. *The New*
1198 *York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/24/us/smith-collegerace.html
1199 Powell, Michael. 2021b (Oct. 20). MIT's choice of lecturer ignited criticism. So did its decision to cancel.
1200 *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/us/dorian-abbotmit.html

REVISED PROOF

1201 Princeton University Faculty Signatories. 2020 (July 4). Open Letter. https://niotprinceton.org/2020/07/
1202 06/princeton-university-faculty-letter-re-antiblackness/.
1203 Repucci, Sarah, and Amy Slipowitz. 2022. *The global expansion of authoritarian rule*. Washington, DC:
1204 Freedom House.
1205 Saldaña, Johnny. 2014. Coding and analysis strategies. In *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*,
1206 ed. Patricia Leavey, 581–598. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
1207 Searle, John R. 1994. Rationalism and realism: What is at stake? In *The research university in a time of*
1208 *discontent*, eds. Jonathan R. Cole, Elinor G. Barber, and Stephen R. Graubard, 55–84. Baltimore:
1209 Johns Hopkins University Press.
1210 Smelser, Neil J. 1993. The politics of ambivalence: Diversity in the research universities. *Daedalus*
1211 122(4): 37–53.
1212 Smelser, Neil J. 2010. *Reflections on the University of California: From the Free Speech Movement to the*
1213 *Global University*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
1214 Soucek, Brian. 2022. Diversity statements. *UC Davis Law Review* 55. https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/
1215 issues/55/4/articles/soucek.html/
1216 Whittington, Keith. 2018. *Speak freely: Why universities must defend free speech*. Princeton: Princeton
1217 University Press.
1218 Will, George. 2022 (Feb. 11). Even by today's standard of campus cowardice and conformity, this repul-
1219 sive episode is noteworthy. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/
1220 02/11/university-illinois-chicagocowardice/
1221 Woodward, Mark. 2019. Cardiovascular disease and the female disadvantage. *International Journal of*
1222 *Environmental Research and Public Health* 16(7): 1165.
1223 Wooldridge, Adrian. 2021. *The aristocracy of talent: How meritocracy remade the modern world*. New
1224 York: Skyhorse Publishing.
1225 Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case study research: Design and methods*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
1226 Young, Jeremy C., and Jonathan Friedman. 2022 (Feb. 1). In higher education, new educational gag
1227 orders would exact unprecedented control over college teaching. *PEN America*. https://pen.org/in-
1228 higher-education-new-educational-gag-orders/
1229 Young, Jeremy C., Jonathan Friedman, and Kasey Meehan. 2023 (Nov. 9). America's Censored Class-
1230 rooms. NewYork: PEN America. https://pen.org/report/americas-censored-classrooms-2023/

1231 **Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps
1232 and institutional affiliations.

1233 Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under
1234 a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted
1235 manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and
1236 applicable law.

REVISED PROOF